

Monday, November 4, 2024

Dear university and college campus communities,

With respiratory virus season approaching, an increase in illnesses such as influenza and COVID-19 is expected. With that in mind, Public Health would like to remind you of ways that you can prevent illness in yourself and the spread of illness in the campus community:

- Stay up to date on your vaccines.
- Stay home or in your residence, if possible, if you are sick or have new symptoms of illness, even if they are mild.
- If you are feeling ill and cannot stay home, consider wearing a mask when in public spaces and especially around those who may be at higher risk of developing serious illness.
- Practice regular hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water when available or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or elbow so the germs are contained.

The seasonal COVID-19 and influenza vaccines are now available in our province, and we invite everyone in Nova Scotia to get both vaccines free of charge. These vaccines are safe and effective and can be given at the same time (sometimes referred to as 'co-administration'). For information on where you can get your seasonal vaccines, go to www.nshealth.ca/seasonal-vaccines.

We are also seeing an increase in whooping cough (pertussis) in Nova Scotia and across Canada. Immunization is the most effective way to protect yourself and the community from this illness. We encourage you to check your vaccine record and ensure your vaccinations are up to date. To access your vaccination records:

- If a resident of Nova Scotia, visit <https://vaxrecordns.nshealth.ca/>
- If a resident outside of Nova Scotia, contact your local public health unit or healthcare provider.

More information about whooping cough is available online at www.nshealth.ca/pertussis.

The routine immunization schedule lists the free, publicly-funded vaccines that Nova Scotians are eligible for and when they should be received: <https://novascotia.ca/dhw/cdpc/documents/Routine-Immunization-Schedules-for-Children-Youth-Adults.pdf>. Vaccines are available through your primary care provider, pharmacies, and local Public Health offices. More information is available at www.nshealth.ca/immunizations.

If you have questions, contact your local Public Health office, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Visit www.nshealth.ca/public-health for contact details and more information to keep you healthy this fall.

Wishing you a happy and healthy academic year.

Best regards,



Dr. Ryan Sommers, MD CCFP FRCPC (PHPM)

Senior Regional Medical Officer of Health and Senior Medical Director, Population & Public Health
Nova Scotia Health