

2024-25 Respiratory Illness Season Screening for Respiratory Illness

Front Office Resource

Information is current as of October 21, 2024.


Ensuring timely access to antivirals for high-risk patients


It is important to identify patients who are at risk of severe complications from flu or COVID-19 so that they can access antiviral treatments as quickly as possible.


≤7
If the date is greater than seven days, book with provider with usual booking process depending on risk factors and severity of illness.

NO
Book with provider with usual booking process and direct patient to **resources**, 811 and to call for an appointment if they are not managing well at home.



Patient with respiratory symptoms calls for appointment


When did symptoms start?


If date is less than seven days, screen for risk severity.


Screen patient by asking:

- Is your child younger than five years old? (If calling about a sick child.)
- Are you over 65?
- Do you have any health conditions that might make it harder to deal with infection?
- Have you received the COVID-19 and flu vaccines this fall/winter or had COVID-19 in recent months?

If patients think they may have COVID-19 they can also selfscreen using the provincial online tool: www.ontario.ca/covid-treatment-screener which can direct them to pharmacy for testing and access to Paxlovid. 

*Antivirals for flu should be initiated as soon as possible after symptom onset, ideally within 12 hours but up to 48 hours from symptom onset. Consideration can be given to later initiation of antivirals. For COVID-19, Paxlovid must be started within **five** days of symptom onset and Remdesivir within **seven** days of symptom onset.*

YES
Follow office procedure to ensure assessment within 24 hours. Appointments can be in-person or virtual.

Ontario College of Family Physicians



Risk factors for severe illness or complications from the flu or COVID-19 include:

- Younger than five years old or over 65 years old
- Living in chronic care facility
- Indigenous
- Asthma, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, or other lung diseases, including tuberculosis
- Medications that affect the immune system, like chemotherapy or steroids
- Six months to 18 years old and being treated with aspirin for long periods
- Heart diseases (e.g., coronary artery disease, heart failure)
- High blood pressure
- Kidney disease
- Diabetes (type 1 or type 2)
- Neurological disease or neurodevelopmental disorder (e.g., spinal cord injury, seizure disorder, cerebral palsy)
- Immune system disorder (e.g., HIV infection, common variable immunodeficiency)
- Cancer
- Organ or stem cell transplant
- Pregnant, or pregnant within the last four weeks
- Intellectual or developmental disability
- Mental health disorders
- Smoker
- Obesity
- Sickle cell disease