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## **Re: Reduce the Spread of Respiratory Viruses**

Dear Parents or Guardian,

You and your child play an important part in protecting our school communities to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses this fall and winter:

### **Reduce virus spread**

- Stay home if sick or have symptoms of being sick, even if they are mild.
- Use the [TPH screening questionnaire](#) or the provincial [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) before attending school or work if there are symptoms of illness.
- [Clean hands](#) often.
- [Cover their cough](#) or sneeze with a tissue or their elbow.
- Wear a well-fitted, high-quality [mask](#) in crowded indoor settings with poor ventilation, especially if at higher risk of getting very sick

### **Get the updated COVID-19 and flu vaccine this fall**

- Both vaccines are important to prevent serious illness.
- The updated COVID-19 vaccine targets the XBB variant and will better protect from the variants spreading now and [long-COVID](#).
- Everyone six months and older can get the updated [COVID-19 vaccine](#) and [flu vaccine](#) starting October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at:
  - Toronto Public Health [fixed-site vaccination clinics](#). Book an appointment at [TPHbookings.ca](#). Only one appointment is needed to get both vaccines.
  - Participating [pharmacies](#) or health care provider's office.

### **It is also important to have your child up-to-date with routine vaccinations**

- In Ontario, the [Immunization of School Pupil Act \(ISPA\)](#) requires all students to be up-to-date with certain vaccines, or have a [valid exemption](#). This includes vaccinations for measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, meningococcal and chickenpox.
  - Parents must report any vaccines not given by TPH through [Immunization Connect \(ICON\)](#).
- Students in grades 7 to 12 can get the hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV) and meningococcal vaccines through the [Student Immunization Program \(SIP\)](#).

- How to get these free vaccines:
  - **SIP school clinics** will offer hepatitis b, human papillomavirus (HPV) and meningococcal vaccines in some schools, during school hours **to grade 7 and 8 students who attend the school**. Visit the [School Immunization Program webpage](#) to see if your child's school has a scheduled clinic.
  - **TPH fixed-site vaccination clinics**. Book an appointment at [TPHbookings.ca](http://TPHbookings.ca) if your child missed their school vaccines or if a clinic is not being held at your child's school.
  - **A health care provider's office**. Ask your health care provider to [order these vaccines](#) for free from TPH and report it through ([ICON](#)).

### More Information

Visit [toronto.ca/health](http://toronto.ca/health) to learn more about:

- [Respiratory Viruses: Information for Parents & Caregivers](#)
- [Childhood Vaccines – Quick Reference Guide](#)

### Questions?

Contact Toronto Health Connection at 416-338-7600 or [PublicHealth@toronto.ca](mailto:PublicHealth@toronto.ca).

Sincerely,



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