

September 2022

Re: Antiviral medication for institutional influenza outbreaks, 2022-2023 season

Antiviral medication is recommended for the management of institutional outbreaks of influenza A and/or influenza B. Research has shown that antiviral drugs are effective for both the prevention (prophylaxis) and early treatment of influenza infection. The use of antiviral medication in conjunction with other outbreak control measures can quickly bring influenza outbreaks in health care facilities under control.

Prophylaxis

- Antiviral prophylaxis is recommended for **all residents** in the outbreak affected area who are not already ill with influenza, whether previously vaccinated or not until the outbreak is declared over.
- Antiviral prophylaxis is recommended for all **unvaccinated asymptomatic staff** who work in the area of the facility where the influenza outbreak is occurring, until the outbreak is declared over.

Treatment

- Antiviral treatment should be started for ill residents who meet the outbreak case definition, as soon as possible and preferably within 48 hours of symptom onset. Treatment should be given for a total of five days.

It is recommended that residents and staff consult with their own health care provider for prophylaxis and treatment decisions. Two antiviral influenza medications, oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®) are licensed for use in Canada, for the treatment and prophylaxis of influenza A and B in adults. Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) is the recommended drug of choice for both prophylaxis and treatment in an influenza A or B outbreak, as it is administered orally. When the predominant circulating strain is resistant to oseltamivir, Zanamivir (Relenza®) is recommended for both prophylaxis and treatment in an influenza A or B outbreak. Please refer to the current manufacturer's product monograph for recommendations concerning the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza.

These recommendations may change in the event of a vaccine mismatch; any updates to recommendations will be communicated to Homes.

Please contact the Communicable Disease Control program at (705) 474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808 x 5229 with any questions on antiviral medication for institutional influenza outbreaks.

Source: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (2018). Recommendations for the control of respiratory infection outbreaks in Long-Term Care Homes.