

MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICERS **UPDATE** FOR PHYSICIANS

March 29, 2019

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Late Season Influenza Activity

The Interior Health Medical Health Officers would like to make all community physicians aware of the following:

This week the Provincial Health Officer for B.C. approved the extension of influenza season beyond March 31 and into April due to ongoing influenza activity across the province.

The late season influenza being seen is predominantly H3N2. The estimate of vaccine effectiveness for this strain is below the observed effectiveness for the H1N1 strain this season.

Consideration for Empiric Antiviral Treatment

- ✦ Because influenza A(H3N2) viruses may be associated with severe disease in older adults, early empiric treatment with influenza antiviral medications is recommended for hospitalized and high-risk patients, especially those 65 years and older.
- ✦ Antiviral treatment should be started as soon as possible after illness onset and should not wait for laboratory confirmation.

If you have any questions regarding influenza please contact the on-call MHO at 1-866-457-5648

Additional Resources

[BCCDC Weekly Influenza Surveillance Reports
https://bit.ly/2CLKWQL](https://bit.ly/2CLKWQL)

[Canadian mid-season estimates of influenza effectiveness for 2018/19
https://bit.ly/2S8RCBk](https://bit.ly/2S8RCBk)

[US CDC – Influenza A \(H3N2\) Activity Health Advisory
https://bit.ly/2THkwFB](https://bit.ly/2THkwFB)