

Patient Update

Date: Friday Oct. 27

Dear patients,

We are writing to share updated information about flu vaccines in our clinics, as well as information about COVID-19 and the new RSV vaccines.

Health Promotion Updates

Flu Vaccines are here!

Getting the flu vaccine is an important step in protecting yourself and loved ones this season. Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone aged six months and older. How much protection the vaccine gives depends on a person's immune system and the match with the virus strains spreading that year.

The vaccine provides some protection even when the match is not exact. Flu vaccines are about 50% effective in preventing the flu in healthy adults. As with any vaccine, there can be some mild side effects but the flu vaccine cannot make you sick from influenza because it does not contain any live virus. It takes two weeks for your body to develop an immune response from the vaccine. We strongly recommend that everyone eligible get vaccinated against the flu this year.

You can book your flu vaccine with us online or by calling us.

Online Booking options include:

- Saturday Nov 4th and Sunday Nov 5th 9-12 pm and 1-4 pm – 80 Bond Health Center
<https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/online-booking/3df19857-aafb-4061-b53d-e9047669034f>
- Monday Nov 6th- 5:30-7:30 pm- 80 Bond Health Centre
<https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/online-booking/48a0a951-c364-46a4-8267-cce5c8a0b7d7>
- Tuesday Nov 7th- 5:30-7:30 pm- St Lawrence Health Center- 140 The Esplanade
<https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/online-booking/a9eadc46-5b9e-4672-8d77-0eba235b60b9>
- Wednesday Nov 8th- 5:30-7:30 pm- Wellesley St. Jamestown Health Center-95 Homewood Ave

<https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/online-booking/69f1ebe8-27e4-4a3f-8f13-93f771a1436e>

- Thursday Nov 9th- 5:30-7:30 pm- Wellesley St. Jamestown Health Center-95 Homewood Ave

<https://ocean.cognisantmd.com/online-booking/69f1ebe8-27e4-4a3f-8f13-93f771a1436e>

If you are booking more than one family member for a flu vaccine, please book all the appointments on the same schedule, one appointment after the other. This will keep your family together for the vaccine visit and help us manage clinic flow.

Phone Booking Options

You can also book your flu vaccine at your local clinic starting October 30th.

Each of our locations will offer a half-day flu vaccine clinic each week for the entire month of November. To book an appointment at your local clinic, please call your [clinic phone number](#).

Other options for booking your flu vaccine this year include going to your local pharmacy or a public health vaccine clinic.

COVID-19 Vaccines

COVID-19 Vaccines continue to offer protection from severe outcomes of COVID-19 infection including hospitalization and death. Vaccination may not always prevent getting sick but it will help reduce severity of illness, and decreases the risk of developing post COVID-19 condition (commonly known as Long-COVID).

The new XBB variant COVID-19 fall 2023 vaccines are now available to everybody aged six months and older. Most people will only require one dose of the new XBB variant COVID vaccine, but this can vary based on whether you have had past COVID vaccines, your age and health status. To learn more about COVID-19 including vaccines, self-assessment, testing and treatment, and other public health advice, visit the [Ontario Health COVID-19 information page](#)

Due to logistical challenges related to delivering COVID vaccines we will not be providing COVID-19 vaccines in our clinics this fall. However, we still strongly recommend everyone to get the new XBB variant COVID vaccine as soon as they are eligible. Some booking options in the community include:

- [Find a vaccine clinic near you](#)
- [Local Pharmacy](#)

RSV Vaccine

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a respiratory virus that infects the nose, throat, and lungs. It usually starts spreading in the fall and peaks in the winter months. RSV infection can happen at any age; however, it can be more serious in young children and older adults with underlying health conditions such as asthma, chronic heart or lung disease, and those with weakened immune systems.

There is a newly approved vaccine for RSV (AREXVY), that is available to people 60 years of age and older. Currently this vaccine is publicly funded for people over 60 living in long-term care homes, Elder Care Lodges, and some retirement homes. If you are interested in getting this vaccine and 60 or older, please book an appointment with your MD or NP to learn more and get a prescription to receive this vaccine. To learn more about the RSV vaccine, please see [Toronto Public Health's](#) website.

Patient and Family Advisory Council Updates

Thank you to all patients who have indicated interest in joining our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). We are overwhelmed by the amount of expertise and knowledge among our population of patients and look forward to following up with each individual in the coming weeks. Please stay tuned.

Clinic Updates

We continue to offer online appointment booking (OAB) options for many providers. Check our website to see if you can [book your appointment online](#).

Talk care and be well,
SMAFHT Leadership