

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

December 2022

Holiday Expectations

Winter can be a difficult time for families due to financial stress, having less exposure to daylight and staying indoors due to weather. We have rounded up some tips and ideas to support students and their families.

- **Focus on what is in your control** – consider how you can embed traditions or parts of traditions that are important to you.
- **Managing disappointment** – start conversations early around what the holidays may look like this year. Allow children to share feelings of disappointment if things look different, and take time to share ideas on new holiday plans.
- **Don't underestimate your family's resilience** – resilience is about bouncing back from challenges. Notice what works for your family, and remember that this will look different for everyone.

Resources:

<https://www.family.cmho.org/mental-health-ready-for-the-holidays/>

<https://www.family.cmho.org/winter-mental-health-tips/>

The Impact of Social Media on Students – Grade 6 & 7

In case you missed it: School Health Nurse Jenn has a round-table discussion with the Niagara Sexual Assault Centre around the topic of social media, cyber bullying and consent. This conversation is geared toward parents of students in grades six and seven.

Check out the video here: <https://youtu.be/iRyNmo7XitI>

Routine Vaccination and Immunizations



Protect your children from vaccine preventable diseases this school year by ensuring their routine vaccinations are up-to-date.

If your child missed their opportunity to receive any routine vaccine(s), it is important to get them back on [schedule](#). Connect with your health care provider to check which vaccine(s) your child may need. Learn more about [where to get your child vaccinated](#) and the [vaccination schedule for children in school](#) on our website.

All vaccines for children under 18 years of age must be [reported to Public Health](#). Every time your child receives a vaccine, you must report it:

- [Online](#)
- Phone: 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425 or
- Fax: 905-688-8225

Please note that at this time, you **do not** need to report any COVID-19 or influenza (flu) vaccination details.

Protect Yourself and Others – Wear a Mask



Many different respiratory viruses are spreading right now in our community. These include the flu, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), and COVID-19. While anyone can get really sick from these viruses, children are more at risk – especially from the flu and RSV. Unfortunately, we are seeing this across Ontario and more young children are being hospitalized due to these viruses.

By wearing a mask, you help protect yourself and others from respiratory viruses. This is why the province and Niagara Region Public Health strongly recommends mask wearing in all indoor public settings, including schools and child care. Public Health also recommends wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings. If possible, children between the ages of two and five should wear a mask with supervision, if they can tolerate the mask and safely put it on and off.

Learn [more about masks](#).

Not feeling well? Stay home

If your child is feeling sick, it is important that they stay home from school to prevent infections from spreading and to keep others safe.



If your child is feeling sick, they should stay home until:

- They have no fever (without the use of fever reducing medication), AND
- Their other symptoms are improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if they have gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, diarrhea or vomiting)



Important note: if a child has symptoms (regardless of a COVID-19 test result), they should wear a mask at school (and in public) for 10 days from when their symptoms started.

COVID-19 Updates

The COVID-19 vaccine is the best line of defense for preventing the spread of COVID-19 in schools and protecting our community. Children six months of age and older can get vaccinated at any [Niagara Region Public Health COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic](#).

You can also get the COVID-19 vaccine from:

- [Participating pharmacies](#)
- Participating family doctor's offices and medical [walk-in clinics](#)
- [GO-VAXX buses](#) (five years of age and older)



If you or your child are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or have tested positive on a PCR or rapid antigen test, please review our [guidance on self-isolation](#).