

Oseltamivir Prescription Required for Healthcare Workers (HCWs)

Physician, Nurse Practitioner, or Prescribing Pharmacist

The healthcare worker presenting with this letter works in a facility in which an influenza outbreak has been identified and requires a prescription for antiviral prophylaxis.

The Medical Officer of Health requires antiviral prophylaxis be prescribed (currently, oseltamivir is recommended) for HCWs who have not been immunized with this season's influenza vaccine at least 14 days before presenting to you, and who provide care for vulnerable populations within the setting of an influenza outbreak. A person is considered protected by this season's influenza vaccine 14 days after being immunized.

Antiviral prophylaxis for unimmunized HCWs should begin as soon as possible after the identification of the influenza outbreak. Unimmunized HCWs who do not take prophylaxis **will not be permitted to work at the outbreak facility for the duration of the outbreak**, and they are also responsible for notifying other employers of their exposure.

Oseltamivir Duration

The duration of prophylaxis depends on the health care worker's immunization status.

- **Immunized**
 - **If immunized in the past few days:** antiviral prophylaxis should be started now and continue until 14 days post-immunization, or for the duration of the outbreak, whichever period is shorter.
 - **If immunized over 14 days before:** antiviral prophylaxis is not required if the HCW received seasonal influenza vaccine 14 days or more before their visit to you.
- **Unimmunized**
 - Antiviral prophylaxis should continue until the outbreak is over. Initially, a 10 day prescription could be prescribed with one refill.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Central Zone Medical Officers of Health by calling 403-356-6430.

Thank you for your assistance with this important health issue.