

September 28, 2020

Advance Prescriptions for Antiviral Medication During Influenza Outbreaks - Edmonton Zone

Dear Colleagues,

Provision of antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks for:

- **All residents living in Congregate Living Settings (CLS) (Lodges/Congregate/Supportive Living or Home Living Sites)**
- **Unimmunized Staff working in Long Term Care (LTC) and Congregate Living settings**

Influenza viruses circulate throughout our communities every year. In anticipation of influenza outbreaks occurring in LTC and congregate living sites, we are requesting your assistance with preparing individuals under your care (i.e. living or working in a LTC or congregate living sites) for the upcoming influenza season. Congregate living sites include lodges, manors, seniors' residences, and designated assisted living/supportive living facilities.

All individuals should be encouraged to receive their annual influenza immunization. However, even with good immunization rates, outbreaks of influenza commonly occur in congregate living sites in which communal dining is the norm.

OSELTAMIVIR RECOMMENDATIONS DURING INFLUENZA OUTBREAKS

When an influenza outbreak is declared, the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) recommends the following:

- All residents, whether immunized or not, are to receive oseltamivir antiviral prophylaxis.
- Unimmunized staff (**including unimmunized physicians making site visits**) are required to take oseltamivir antiviral prophylaxis. Staff who are not immunized and are not taking the recommended antiviral prophylaxis should be excluded from working as outlined in the AHS Guidelines for Outbreak Prevention, Control and Management.
- Antiviral prophylaxis is continued for 7 days after onset of symptoms of the last resident case, usually a minimum of 10 days. An oseltamivir dosing chart can be found in the Roche Canada Tamiflu product monograph. An oseltamivir dosing chart, excerpted from the AHS Guidelines for Outbreak Prevention, Control and Management is found in **Appendix A** of this letter.

ACCESS TO OSELTAMIVIR PROPHYLAXIS - RESIDENTS

To facilitate prompt implementation of antiviral prophylaxis:

- Residents of all congregate living sites are asked to contact their physicians in order to receive an advance prescription for oseltamivir antiviral prophylaxis in preparation to the start of influenza season.**
- Please fax a 10-day prescription with a single refill to the resident's pharmacy. Prescriptions will remain on hand until such time the MOH declares an influenza outbreak at the resident's site or for 1 year, whichever comes first.

ACCESS TO OSELTAMIVIR PROPHYLAXIS – STAFF

- Covenant Health OHS and Alberta Health Services WHS have a process in place for staff requiring antiviral prophylaxis. Staff will be advised to contact their respective OHS/WHS department at the time of an influenza outbreak for assessment and advice.
- Non-AHS/Covenant Health staff will be directed to contact their own physician at the time of an influenza outbreak to obtain a prescription if indicated.

ALBERTA INFLUENZA ANTIVIRAL DRUG POLICY

The **Alberta Influenza Antiviral Drug Policy as Applied to Vulnerable Populations Living in Congregate Living Settings (CLS)** policy defines who is eligible for provincially funded antiviral medication during influenza outbreaks.

- **This policy applies to residents of CLS only.**
 - Pharmacies that fill prescriptions for antiviral prophylaxis under this policy are compensated under Alberta Blue Cross as per their Pharmacy Benefact; the resident does not have to pay for these medications (antiviral prophylaxis or treatment doses).

- **The following individuals are not eligible for publicly funded antiviral medication under this policy:**
 - Residents of LTC facilities or nursing homes and patients in a hospital;
 - Residents of LTC are covered under the Nursing Homes Act and patients admitted to hospital are covered under the Hospitals Act
 - Health care workers (HCWs) working in a CLS, LTC facility, nursing homes or hospital;
 - Although HCWs (employees or volunteers) are not eligible for **publicly funded** antiviral medication under this policy, unimmunized staff should still take antiviral prophylaxis. Their employer must have a process in place in regards to coverage of cost of antiviral prophylaxis.

Appendix B of this letter includes a list of important resources related to the management of influenza outbreaks in congregate living sites, Public Health immunization clinic information, and information about current respiratory viruses circulating in Alberta.

If you have questions, please contact the Edmonton Zone MOH at 780-342-0194, Monday to Friday 0800-1630h. After hours, on weekends and holidays please contact the MOH on-call at 780-433-3940.

Thank you for your continued assistance and co-operation.

Christopher Sikora, MD MPH MSc CCFP FRCP(C)
Lead Medical Officer of Health - Edmonton Zone

APPENDIX A

Antiviral (Oseltamivir) Dosing Recommendations

From TAMIFLU® Product Monograph, Roche Canada (revised February 2020) and Lexicomp online (accessed September 21, 2020).

Adults and adolescents (13 years and older)		
Creatinine clearance +	Prophylaxis (10 days or duration of outbreak, whichever is longer*)	Treatment (5 days)
Over 60 mL/min	75 mg once daily	75 mg twice daily
31- 60 mL/min	30 mg once daily or 75 mg every other day **	30 mg twice daily or 75 mg once daily **
10-30 mL/min	30 mg every other day	30 mg once daily
Less than 10 mL/min and not on dialysis Ψ	30 mg PO suspension/capsule x 1 dose for duration of outbreak ¥	75 mg PO x 1 dose for duration of illness ¥
On routine hemodialysis	30 mg immediately, then 30 mg after alternate hemodialysis sessions for duration of outbreak	30 mg immediately, then 30 mg after every dialysis session over 5 days
On peritoneal dialysis	30 mg immediately, then 30 mg once weekly for duration of outbreak	30 mg immediately as a single dose (single dose provides a 5-day duration)
Continuous Renal Replacement Therapy (CRRT, high flux) Ψ	30 mg once daily	30 mg twice daily
Pediatrics (1-12 years) Normal Renal Function		
Body Weight	Prophylaxis (10 days or duration of outbreak, whichever is longer *)	Treatment (5 days)
Less than or equal to 15 kg (less than or equal to 33 lbs)	30 mg once daily	30 mg twice daily
Greater than 15 kg to 23 kg (greater than 33 lbs to 51 lbs)	45 mg once daily	45 mg twice daily
Greater than 23 kg to 40 kg (greater than 51 lbs to 88 lbs)	60 mg once daily	60 mg twice daily
Greater than 40 kg (greater than 88 lbs)	75 mg once daily	75 mg twice daily
<i>Commercially manufactured TAMIFLU for Oral Suspension (6 mg/mL) is the preferred product for pediatric and adult patients who have difficulty swallowing capsules or where lower doses are needed</i>		
Reviewed by U. Chandran and S. Fryters, AHS Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee		
* If influenza outbreak duration is less than 10 days, oseltamivir prophylaxis may be discontinued. Consult with Public Health.		
** If supply of 30 mg preparations is not available or accessible.		
Ψ Note: these dosages are not found in the Roche Canada product monograph		
¥ Reference: Lexicomp August 2012		
+ Serum creatinine tests for residents/patients should be adequate if done within the past year, provided there has not been a sudden change in kidney function or change in weight. Facilities should prepare for respiratory virus outbreak season each year by ordering serum creatinine and recording resident weights. A baseline temperature should also be taken and recorded. Ultimately, prescribers are responsible for determining the appropriate antiviral dose for their patients. Early initiation of antiviral treatment is critical for treatment effectiveness. In situations where renal function has been unstable in the past, or patient/resident oral intake/urine output has been poor in the immediate prior period, or where creatinine results are older than one year prior, antiviral treatment can be started using the most recent creatinine clearance estimate for dosing, with blood work sent off within 24 hours, and the result used to adjust the timing and amount of subsequent doses.		
<i>In the event of antiviral resistance in the outbreak influenza strain, alternate recommendations for antiviral prophylaxis will be provided by the Zone MOH.</i>		

APPENDIX B

Resource List

1. Information about many important health issues can be found on the Edmonton Zone Medical Officer of Health website at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/ezmoh.aspx>
2. Additional information about the management of influenza outbreaks in Lodge/Congregate/Supportive Living, as well as Acute Care and Long Term Care (Facility Living) sites, can be found in the CDC Outbreak Toolkit, available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/medstaff/Page13790.aspx>.
3. Information about the current respiratory viruses circulating in Alberta is available on the AHS Surveillance website at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/services/Page13524.aspx>.
4. To arrange influenza immunization appointment at a local Public Health Centre, Health Link can be contacted at 811.
5. For additional Alberta Health Services influenza resources, please visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza.asp>
6. For more information about the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI) Canada antiviral guidelines and to also view “*The use of antiviral drugs for influenza: A foundation document for practitioners*” please visit the AMMI website: <https://www.ammi.ca/?ID=122&Language=ENG>
7. An oseltamivir dosing chart can be found in the Roche Canada Tamiflu product monograph https://www.rochecanada.com/PMs/Tamiflu/Tamiflu_PM_E.pdf