**RESPIRATORY VIRUSES**

**MORE THAN A WINTER WORRY**

While influenza remains a significant threat to the health of Ontarians, a number of other respiratory viruses cause disease and illness throughout the year. Understanding respiratory viruses that pose a health threat allows for better control and public health management.

**RESPIRATORY VIRUSES AND ONTARIANS**

Estimated health-adjusted life years lost annually due to respiratory viruses, Ontario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virus</th>
<th>Estimated Health-Adjusted Life Years Lost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>1,615,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhinovirus</td>
<td>3,624</td>
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<tr>
<td>RSV</td>
<td>1,310</td>
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<td>Parainfluenza</td>
<td>840</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coronavirus</td>
<td>392</td>
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**Estimated average annual incidence of respiratory viruses, Ontario**

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**Identifying Respiratory Viruses**

Identification of respiratory viruses, including influenza, helps us manage individual cases as well as institutional outbreaks. Reports using laboratory and surveillance data inform us about respiratory virus activity in the population.  

**Laboratory testing:** Specimens are tested for respiratory viruses using various laboratory methods to confirm a diagnosis.  

**Syndromic surveillance:** Existing health-related data independent of a confirmed diagnosis is used to enable early detection and investigation of clusters of illnesses.

**Respiratory Virus Infections place an economic burden on Ontario, including cost of treatment and lost productivity at work and at school.**

5-20% Per cent of employees in Canada that took any sick leave due to influenza in any given season over the past decade.

**Consider Other Respiratory Viruses**

Many respiratory viruses share common symptoms. Seasonal reports detailing the activity of certain viruses are important tools to avoid misdiagnosis.

These symptoms include:
- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Sneezing**
- **Sore throat**
- **Runny nose**
- **Headache**

This group of respiratory viruses causes similar complications, including:
- **Acute bronchitis**
- **Broncholiths**
- **Upper respiratory tract infection**
- **Pneumonia**
- **Ear infection**

**Take Precautions**

The influenza vaccine is the best way to prevent illness from the influenza virus. Get vaccinated in the fall before influenza season starts.

No vaccine or anti-viral medications for non-influenza viruses exist. Personal protective measures remain essential in preventing disease spread.

**Cough or sneeze into sleeve**

**Clean your hands**

**Remain home if ill**

** cuerpos y seres humanos.**

**For more information, visit: publichealthontario.ca**