

BULLETIN SANTÉ PUBLIQUE NUNAVIK

CALL FOR VIGILANCE Respiratory infections – Fall 2025

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Context

The respiratory virus season is beginning across Québec, and Nunavik is no exception. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) has officially declared that the 2025-2026 flu season began in epidemiological week 46 (November 9 to 15).

Clinicians must increase their vigilance and anticipate the circulation of various respiratory infections in their community. COVID-19, influenza (flu), and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) are infections that place more vulnerable groups at high risk of complications, including:

- 1. Infants and children under the age of 2 years (those under 6 months are at the greatest risk);
- 2. The elderly;
- 3. Residents of a long-term care facility;
- 4. Immunocompromised individuals;
- 5. Individuals presenting with a chronic illness;
- 6. Pregnant individuals.

Global data on circulating influenza virus strains suggest a particularly severe flu season in terms of incidence and mortality, especially among the elderly. Seasonal immunization is therefore essential to protect the most vulnerable.

Diagnostic testing

Multiplex viral tests (NAAT) are available in both hospital laboratories in the territory. We remind you that the Nunavik clientele is vulnerable due to its geographical isolation, and the clinician should take this into account during their assessment. Below is a tool from INESSS concerning the use of various screening tests during flu season: INESSS-Utilisation pertinente des TAAN et TDAR pour la détection des virus respiratoires en saison grippale.

Treatment of respiratory infections

The objective is to **rapidly** offer treatment options to individuals at **high risk of complications**. Below are the INESSS guidelines:



COVID-19 INESSS-Guide d'usage optimal-Antiviraux, anticoagulants et immunomodulateurs-COVID-19

Influenza INESSS-Guide d'usage optimal-Antiviraux-Traitement et prophylaxie de l'influenza

Immunization

Immunization remains the best protection strategy against respiratory infections (COVID-19, influenza, RSV, etc.). You play a crucial role as healthcare providers in reminding your patients of this fact. Take every opportunity to offer opportunistic immunization. The impact of a healthcare professional's recommendation is considerable. For more information: 2025-2026 seasonal immunization campaign.

Please consult the "Documents de référence" section of <u>boîte à outils INFECTIONS RESPIRATOIRES</u> of the NRBHSS for more details on diagnostic testing and treatment for respiratory infections.

For any **clinical questions or support**, please contact the Respiratory Virus Surveillance and Control Team by email at: ph.community.ipc.nrbhss@ssss.gouv.qc.ca.