

INFLUENZA ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS: INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTS AND STAFF

Influenza, also known as the flu, can be very serious for people living in long-term care homes or retirement homes where it can spread quickly. Along with vaccination, antiviral medications are a tool to prevent spread, severe illness, hospitalization and death. They can be recommended for residents or for staff.

What are antiviral medications?

Antiviral medications help to stop the virus from multiplying in the body. They can shorten how long someone feels sick and reduce the risk of serious complications that can result in hospital stays and death.

The main antiviral medication for the flu is called **oseltamivir, or Tamiflu™**. This medication is taken by mouth, and it is by prescription only. Doctors, nurse practitioners and some pharmacists can prescribe this medication.

When do we take antiviral medications?

Antiviral medications like Tamiflu™ can be recommended when there is an ongoing or suspected flu outbreak. They can be taken as prevention or as treatment.

PREVENTION	TREATMENT
During an outbreak, residents and staff who do not have symptoms and are not sick can take it to prevent getting sick.	Residents and staff who are sick can also take it as treatment to lessen how sick they get.

Whether it is for prevention or for treatment, it is best to take the medication right away. This can reduce illness and the need to go to the hospital.

York Region Public Health works with your home to identify outbreaks, so that you can access the medication from your doctor, nurse practitioner or from the pharmacy as soon as it is recommended.

PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

TTY: Dial 711

york.ca/OutbreakManagement



What about the flu shot?

If your home is experiencing an outbreak, antiviral medications may be recommended, whether you've had the flu shot this year or not. Even those who have had the flu shot can benefit from an antiviral medication.

Antiviral medications do not replace a flu shot. They are both layers of protection. The flu shot reduces the risk of getting sick or lessens how sick you get if you do get the flu. **In some years, flu season can last until May, so it is not too late to get vaccinated.**

Questions?

Contact York Region Public Health at:



1-877-464-9675 ext. 73588

Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



905-953-6478

Weekdays after 4:30 p.m., weekends and statutory holiday