

Changing the Way We Work

June 7, 2024: Infectious Disease and Management of Obesity

Panelists: Dr. Daniel Warshafsky and Dr. Neil Naik

Moderator: Dr. Ali Damji

Curated answers from CoP guests, panelists and co-hosts to the top five in-session questions posed by participants, based on current guidance and information available at the time.

What is the status of the COVID-19 wastewater testing program in Ontario?

The current program has not been discontinued, but it is under review. They will be looking at what benefits come from studying wastewater, given the other tools that we have. It certainly continues to track cases and per cent positivity well, but it's not necessarily providing us with a lot of additional data. What's under review is whether wastewater is a regular metric that is needed going forward.

Is there an update on measles?

We are still seeing measles cases in Ontario due to travel and unvaccinated individuals. I strongly recommend that every child is up to date with the routine schedule or consider vaccinating their children earlier (i.e., before age 1) if they are travelling. Additionally, if a patient receives their first dose before age 1, they will still require two more doses.

Should we be concerned about avian flu?

Avian influenza isn't a current risk to people living in Ontario who aren't in close contact with birds (such as poultry farmers). The concerns this year are really around the transmission now being observed in dairy cattle (especially in the US). We are still seeing very few human cases, but sustained mammal to mammal transmission is a step closer to transmitting from human to human.

What is the preferred dose for Ozempic and when would you expect to see that 15 per cent weight loss?

This varies by patient. The 15 per cent weight loss is not a general goal but is determined by what is safe for the patient.

How does one choose between the various injectable obesity medications?

Wegovy results in on average, 15 to 18 per cent weight loss. The range changes if chosen for the right phenotype, vs those that were not. Saxenda results in on average 8 per cent weight loss. Tirzepatide is currently being studied for weight loss (it has the indication for diabetes) and in studies showed to result in an average of 22 per cent weight loss.

These additional questions and comments were answered live during the session. To view responses, please refer to the session recording.

- What is the current effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccine?
- What is going on with the COVID-19 wastewater testing program in Ontario?
- Will RATs be funded by the province this fall?
- When will the new COVID-19 vaccines be available in the fall?
- Where can you get Paxlovid now?
- Are pregnant women considered immunocompromised? Should they receive a COVID-19 vaccine if their last dose was more than six months ago?
- Why has the wastewater program been discontinued?
- Is there an age where GLP-1 medications are not safe to start? Is there any data on prescribing them to seniors?
- Is the MOH looking at funding the RSV vaccine (Abrysvo) for pregnant individuals given the recent NACI statement for the next RSV season?
- Is there an expected date for when we will hear if Prevnar 20 will be covered in the pediatric, geriatric and high-risk populations?
- We recently had a COVID-19 outbreak in our LTC facility and felt like I had one hand tied behind my back because there is no control over staff or screening, and they can't access a PCR in the community anymore. Why bother with masking in LTC?
- If someone gets the COVID-19 vaccine now they won't be eligible in the fall. Would it not be better to wait until the fall when COVID-19 is likely to be more prevalent?
- Is Bexsero okay for those who are willing to pay out of pocket even though they're not high risk?
- Any input as to why the province is stopping wastewater surveillance for infectious diseases?
- Can clinics order mpox vaccines from public health?
- How do we get the meningitis vaccine for patients?
- Any difference between the different brands of ACWY vaccines?
- Now that many of the COVID programs/supports for testing, monitoring, and ready access to treatment are being less available or withdrawn, are

contingency plans being made for the next public health crisis? It seems that many of the learnings from the original SARS crisis were lost.). What learnings have been incorporated into these new plans?

- How long does the RSV vaccine last?
- If a patient received Bexsero as an infant, do they need a booster prior to attending university?
- Are there any OHIP covered weight loss clinics (that provide medication and behavioural expertise) in Toronto?
- If GLP-1 medications are only effective while patients, should we advise patients to take them long-term?
- Are ultra processed foods playing a large role in the obesity epidemic? Do you have strategies to address this?
- If someone is on Ozempic for weight loss and is interested in switching to Wegovy, is it a direct switch?