



Intercare Corporate Group Inc.
501-5920 Macleod Trail SW
Calgary, AB
T2H 0K2
Tel: (403) 255-4969
Fax: (403) 252-6591
www.intercarealberta.com

Email questions or feedback to:
feedback@intercarealberta.com

Infection Prevention & Control

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Influenza

The Fall 2023-24 influenza season has already begun with Influenza Outbreaks being experienced throughout the province of Alberta. The 2022-23 Influenza season in Alberta saw 62 Influenza Outbreaks as compared to 38 Covid-19 Outbreaks. There were 9,732 cases of influenza in the 2022-23 season, with 2,236 hospitalizations, 235 admissions and 121 deaths.

INFLUENZA —> PREVENTION AND SERIOUSNESS:

- Influenza is the most common ‘*vaccine preventable*’ disease that can lead to hospitalization and death in adults.
- Influenza vaccination can help prevent the spread of influenza infections from person-to-person.
- Influenza vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza infections and health complications that can result from having the disease.
- Although most people will fully recover from influenza infections in 7 to 10 days, influenza illness can lead to severe disease or complications (or both), up to and including hospitalization and death.
- Influenza vaccinations are required on an annual basis because:
 - The specific strains of influenza viruses contained in annual vaccines are reviewed and often modified (altered) on a yearly basis by the World Health Organization (WHO) to ensure a more ‘effective match’ against the specific strains of influenza viruses that are expected to circulate in a given year.
 - The body's immune response to influenza vaccination may be transient and/or not persist beyond a one year period of time.

INFLUENZA —> INCUBATION:

- Individuals with influenza are considered to be **infectious (contagious)** one (1) day before symptoms develop and up to five (5) days after becoming ill.
- The period in which an infected person is considered **contagious** depends on the person’s age and health. Young children and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for longer than one (1) week.
- The time frame between influenza exposure and the development of influenza symptoms is approximately one (1) to three (3) days, with an approximate average of two (2) days.

INFLUENZA —> SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Sudden onset of illness that typically starts with a headache, chills and cough, followed rapidly by:
 - Loss of appetite;
 - Muscle aches and fatigue;
 - Runny nose, sneezing;
 - Watery eyes and throat irritation;
 - Possible occurrence of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, especially in children;
 - Fever (although fever may not be prominent in children under 5 years of age and adults 65 years of age and older).

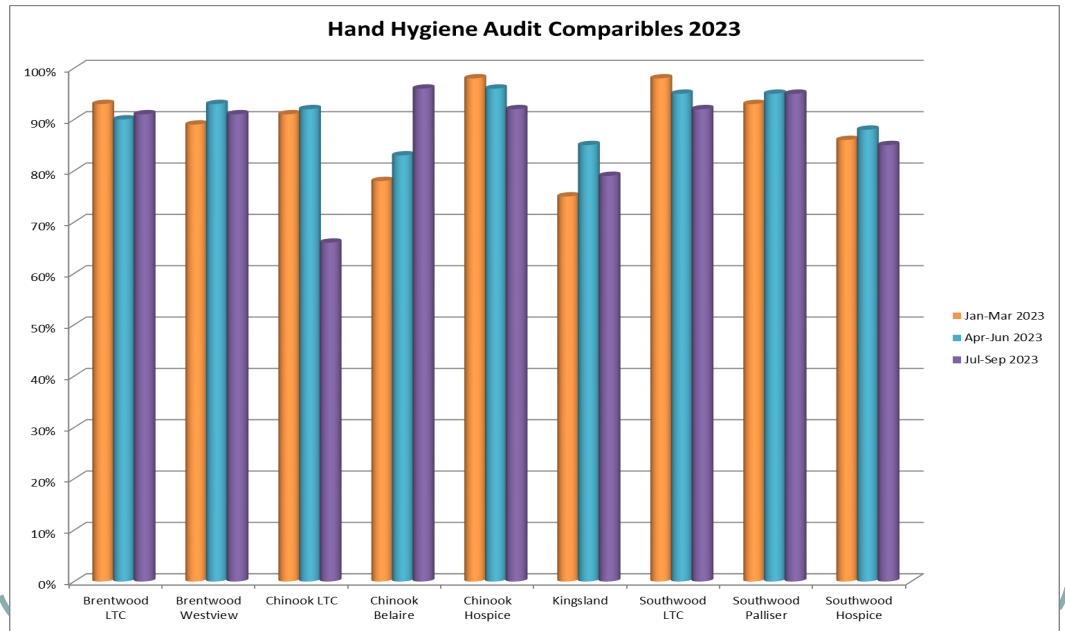
Are You Ready For
Flu Season?



Hand Hygiene Audit Results

Hand Hygiene Auditing is done on a monthly basis at all Intercare sites. During these audits, the “Four (4) Moments of Hand Hygiene” are observed, as well as proper glove use.

The graph below shows results of on-going Hand Hygiene Auditing at Intercare Care Homes.



Hand Hygiene Importance

Handwashing is the simplest and most important way to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting sick. Washing your hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections.

Germs can spread from person to person or from surfaces to people when you:

- ♥ Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ♥ Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands.
- ♥ Touch surfaces or objects that have germs on them.
- ♥ Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into your hands and then touch other people’s hands or common objects.

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during the **key times** listed below when you are most likely to become exposed to and/or spread germs:

- ♥ Before, during and after preparing food.
- ♥ Before and after eating food.
- ♥ Before and after caring for someone who is ill.
- ♥ Before and after providing any kind of personal care to someone.
- ♥ Before and after treating a cut or wound.
- ♥ After using the toilet.
- ♥ After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- ♥ After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing,
- ♥ After touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste.
- ♥ After handling pet food or pet treats.
- ♥ After touching garbage.
- ♥ After changing bed linens or towels.

