

Immunizations

KEY MESSAGES:

- Community partners, along with the immunization and school health teams at APH have been working hard to catch students up with their immunizations as COVID-19 closures impacted coverage rates.
- HPV coverage for Algoma 17-year-olds in the 2022 - 2023 school year was 63.5% compared to 68.5% across Ontario⁽⁵⁾.
- Influenza immunizations rates for our 65+ age-group are nearly 40% higher than the rest of our population⁽⁷⁾.

Immunization is one of the greatest public health achievements of all time. Vaccines save lives, prevent the spread of diseases and reduce healthcare costs. While immunization takes place around the world, access and coverage varies across countries. In Ontario, we are fortunate to have publicly funded vaccines. Different vaccines are recommended at different times through your life.

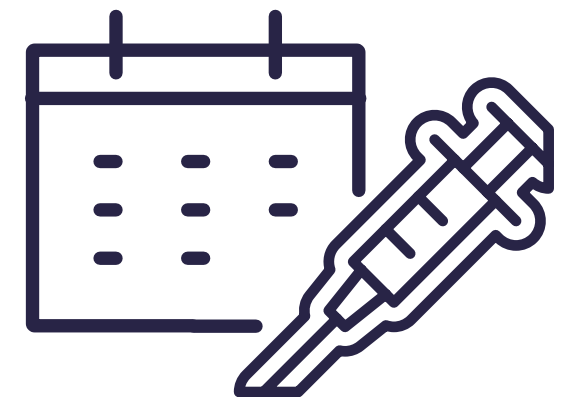
Childhood and school-based immunizations

In Ontario, there is a series of recommended routine immunizations that each child should receive before they reach school age. The vaccines required for school protect against tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, measles, mumps, rubella, varicella¹ (chicken pox), and meningitis.

Public health nurses visit schools across Algoma to administer vaccines to all grade 7 students (with parental consent), every year. These include a mandatory meningococcal (meningitis) vaccine, and the recommended hepatitis B and human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines.

The Child Care and Early Years Act & Immunization of School Pupil's Act (ISPA)

These acts require children who attend licensed childcare and/or schools in Ontario to be immunized against certain infections.



¹Varicella vaccine is required for children born in 2010 or later

Why does my child need a vaccine to protect them from the HPV virus when they aren't sexually active yet?

- ▶ The HPV vaccine is offered to grade 7 students so that they have excellent protection against this infection if they become sexually active in the future.

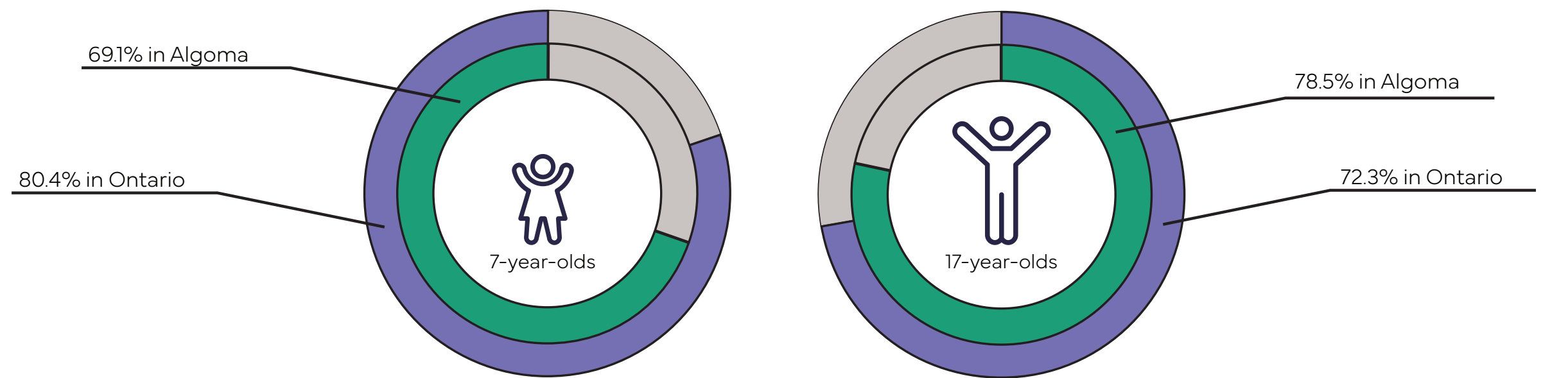
The vaccine is very safe and effective. Evidence from the delivery of over 270 million doses of HPV vaccine show that there are no serious side effects after receiving it⁽²⁾. A full series of the vaccine prevents 9 types of HPV that can lead to genital warts, and cancers such as cervical, vulvar, vaginal, penile, anal, throat and mouth. HPV causes almost 100% of all cervical cancer cases. Achieving an HPV vaccination rate of over 90% by 2025, together with effective screening and treatment could eliminate cervical cancer by 2040^(3, 4).

The HPV vaccine is offered to all students in grade 7, and they remain eligible to receive this vaccine at no charge until the end of high school. The vaccine is available to adults for a fee and is free for men, up to age 26, who have sex with other men.

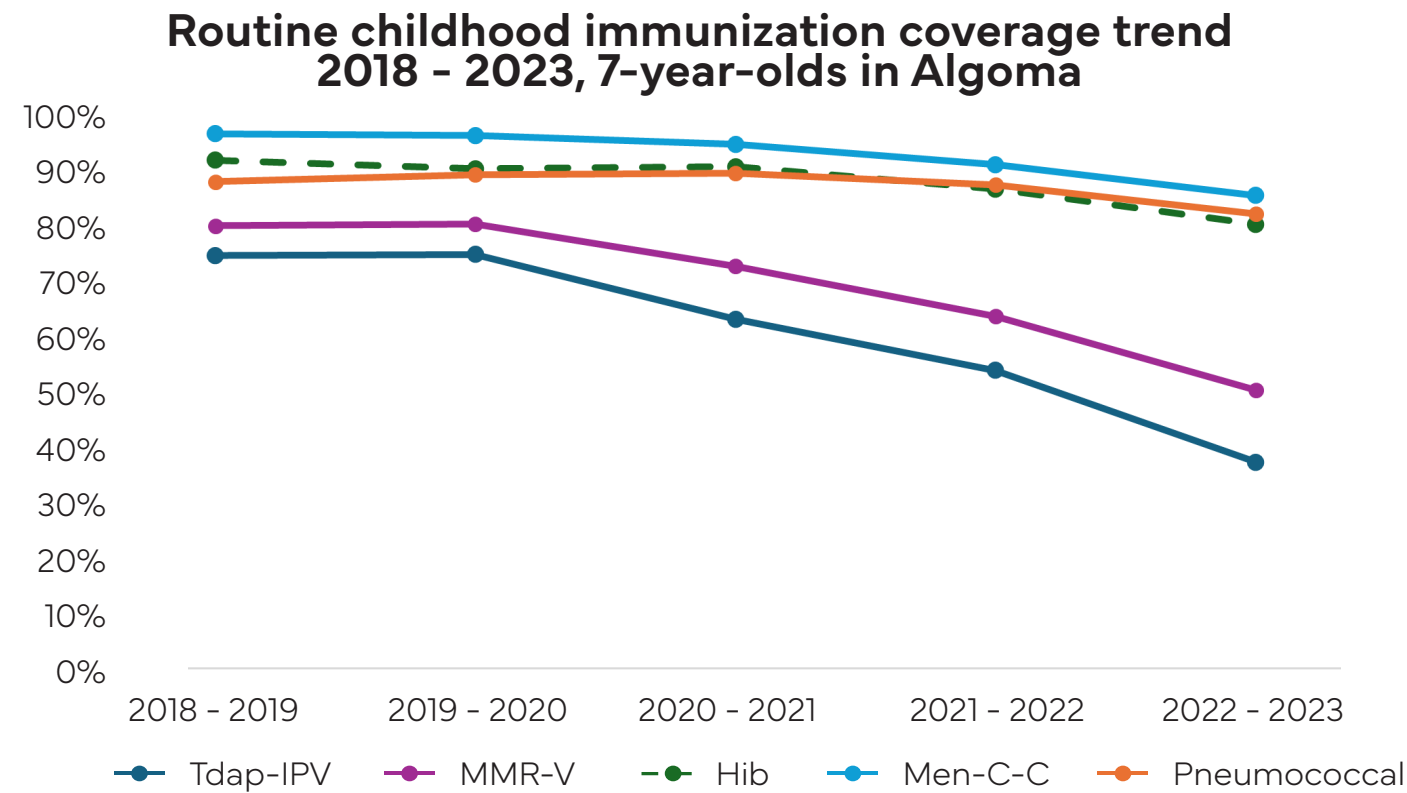
Immunization coverage

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2018-2019 school year), the combined immunization coverage of 7-year-old Algoma students who were up-to-date in their routine ISPA immunizations was notably lower than Ontario students. On the other hand, 17-year-old Algoma students had a coverage rate that was higher than Ontario students⁽⁵⁾.

Combined immunization coverage in the 2018 - 2019 school year



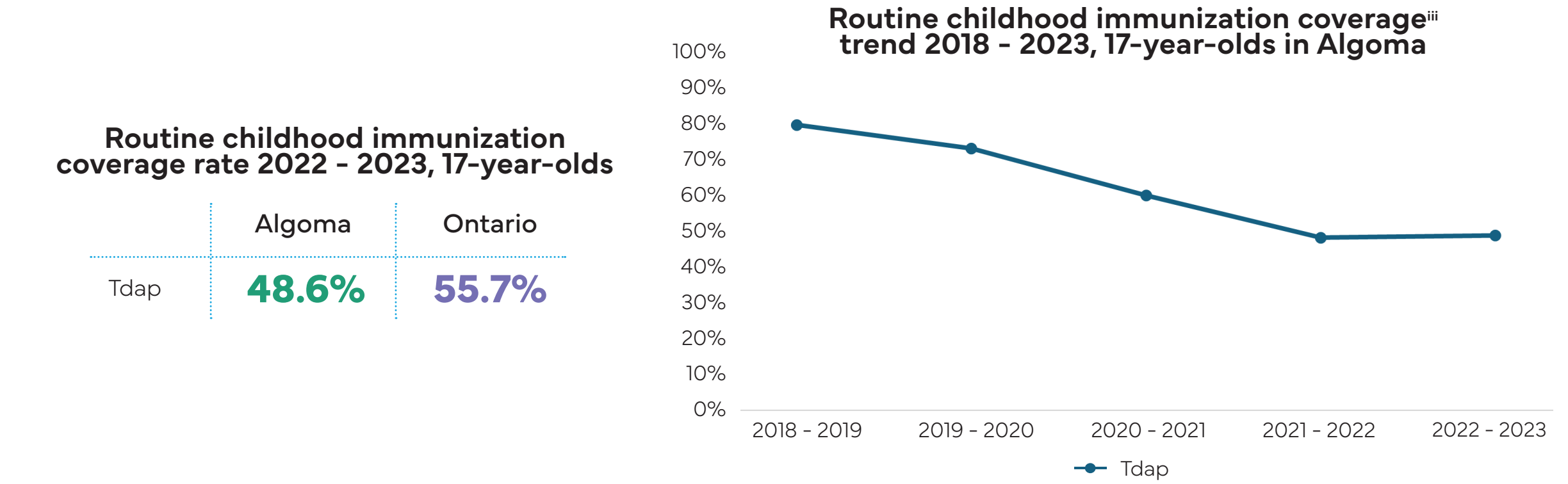
The pandemic reduced school vaccination coverage and reporting because schools were closed. Public health was also focused on pandemic measures across the province. Coverage for routine immunizationsⁱⁱ between 2018 –2023 has been steadily declining in Algoma for 7-year-olds^(5, 6).



Routine childhood immunization coverage rate 2022 - 2023, 7-year-olds

	Algoma	Ontario
Tdap-IPV	37.5%	59.5%
MMR-V	50.6%	65.4%
Hib	80.7%	73.8%
Men-C-C	85.9%	79.5%
Pneumococcal	82.6%	70.6%

Tdap coverage rate for 17-year-olds went down steadily during the pandemic because a booster dose of this vaccine is required during high school. Many students missed this dose due to pandemic closures^(5, 6). It is anticipated that both, the 7-year-old and 17-year-old coverage rates will improve due to the significant catch-up work that APH and community partners have done in 2024.



ⁱⁱ Reference vaccine glossary at end of chapter.
ⁱⁱⁱ The MMR and polio coverage have been omitted from this graph as no further doses of these vaccines are required after the last booster at age 6.

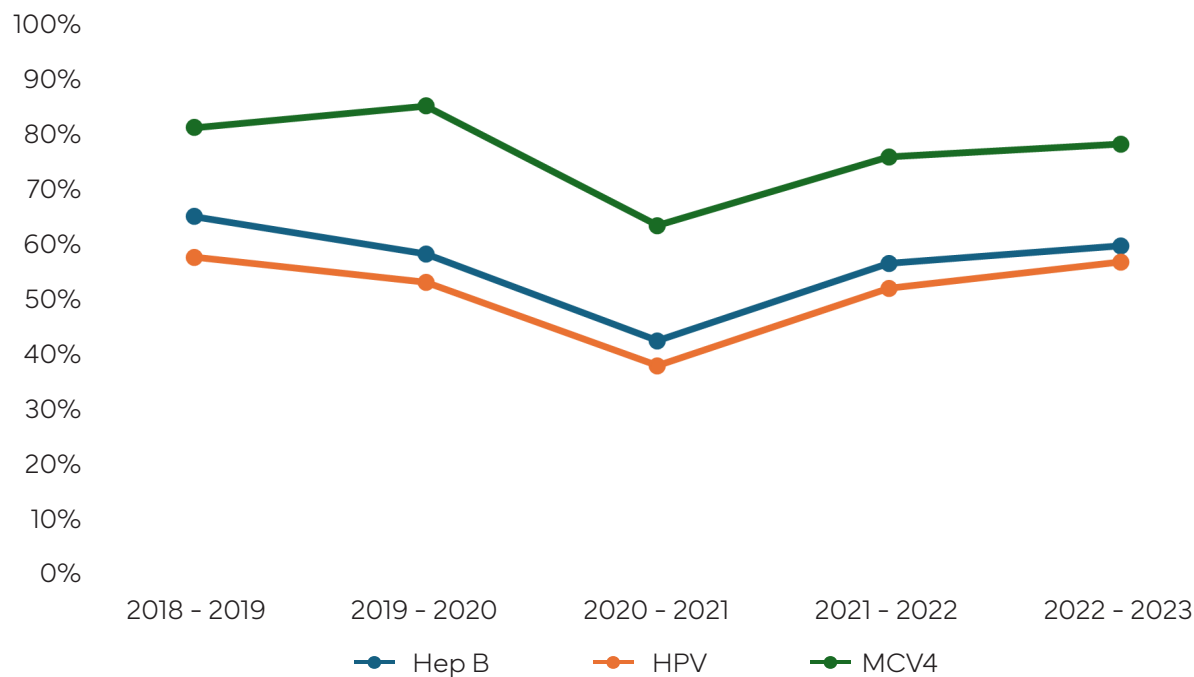
Catch-up clinics

Ontario's Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) requires that children and adolescents attending primary or secondary school get immunized against certain diseases, unless they have a valid exemption.

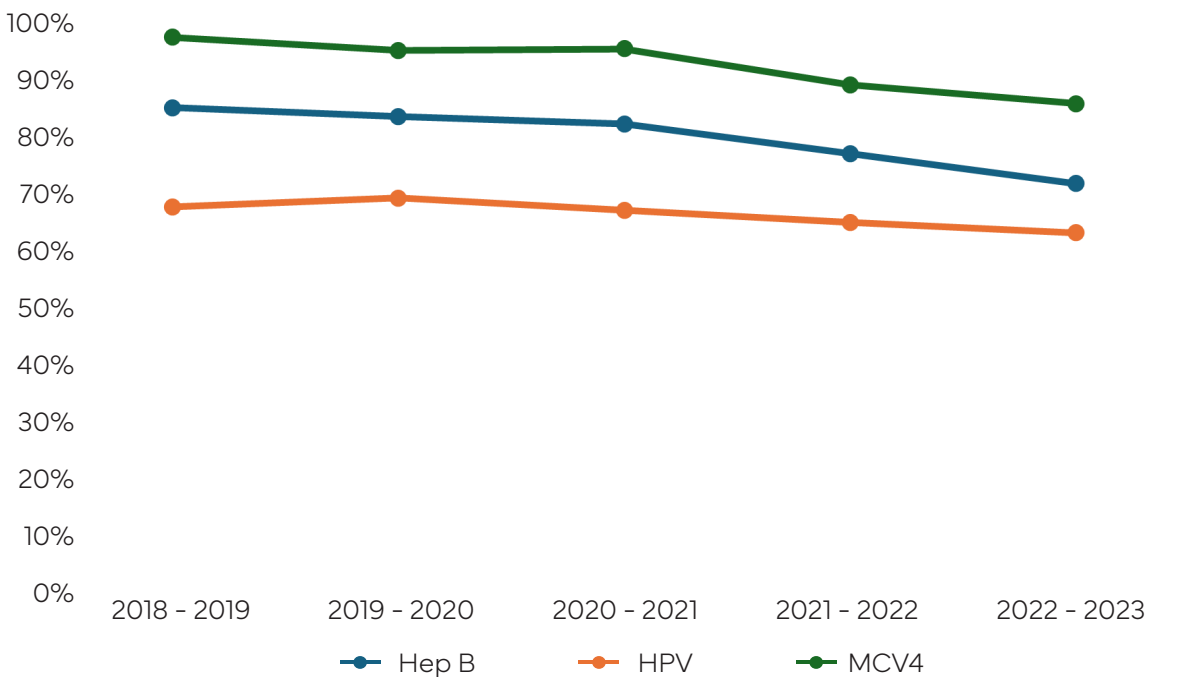
Throughout 2024, APH has been offering catch-up clinics for school-age children who are behind on their immunizations because of the pandemic. Keeping vaccine coverage high helps to strengthen the immunity for everyone as most of the population is vaccinated.

Although school-based immunizations were lower during the 2020 - 2021 school year (12-year-olds), they improved in the 2021 - 2022 school year. 17-year-olds also had a decrease in coverage between the 2021 and 2023 school years⁽⁶⁾.

School-based immunization coverage trend
2018 - 2023, 12-year-olds in Algoma



School-based immunization coverage trend
2018 - 2023, 17-year-olds in Algoma



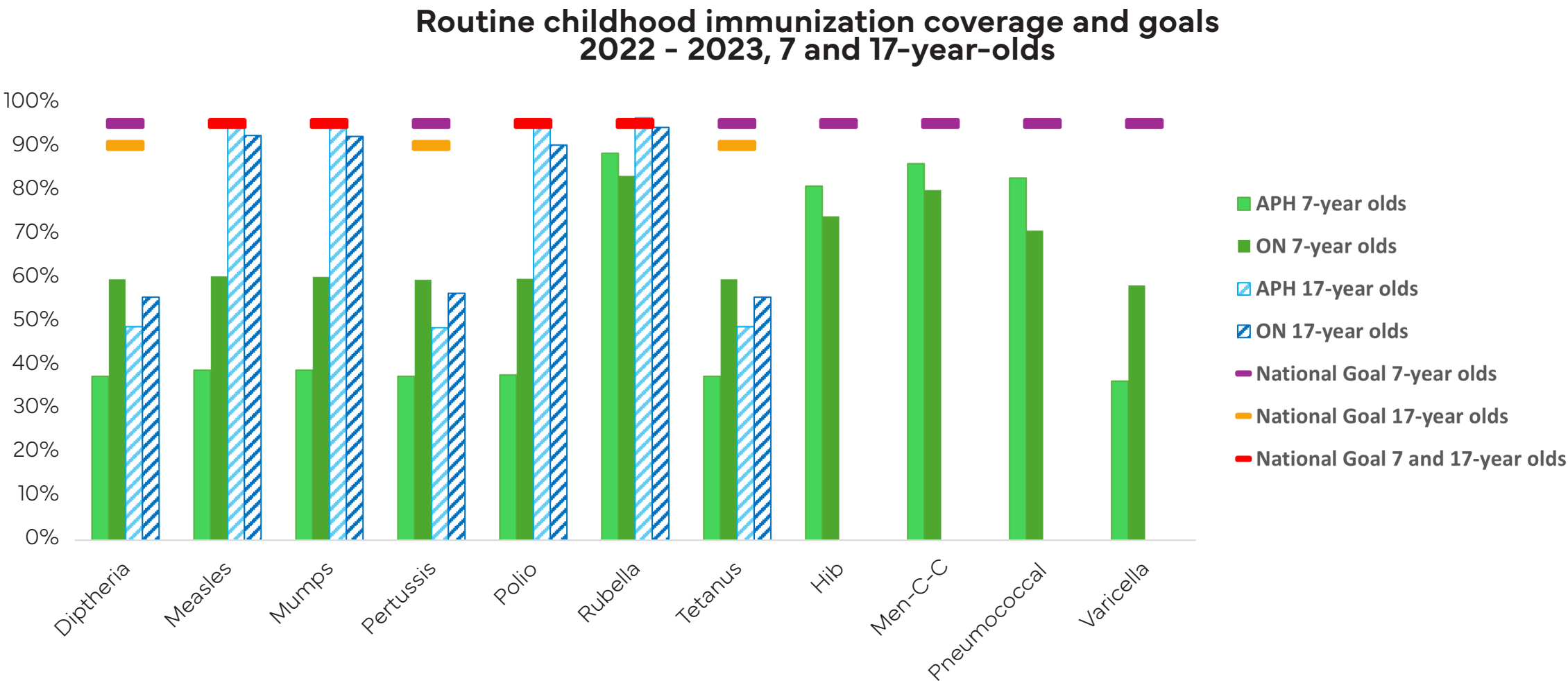
Routine childhood immunization coverage
rate 2022 - 2023, 12-year-olds

	Algoma	Ontario
Hep B	59.6%	58.2%
HPV	56.6%	47.8%
MCV4	78.1%	73.7%

Routine childhood immunization
coverage rate 2022 - 2023, 17-year-olds

	Algoma	Ontario
Hep B	72.0%	76.4%
HPV	63.5%	68.5%
MCV4	85.9%	91.1%

Post-pandemic coverage (2022 - 2023 school year) in 7-year-olds is much lower than the historical coverage pre-pandemic. The 17-year-old cohort in Algoma has high coverage rates for mumps, measles, and rubella (MMR), and polio, just above provincial coverage. This coverage meets the national goal⁽⁶⁾.



National coverage goals

Health Canada has set vaccination coverage goals for 2025, in a joint effort with the World Health Organization (WHO). You can read more about this at [Vaccination Coverage Goals and Vaccine Preventable Disease Reduction Targets by 2025](#).

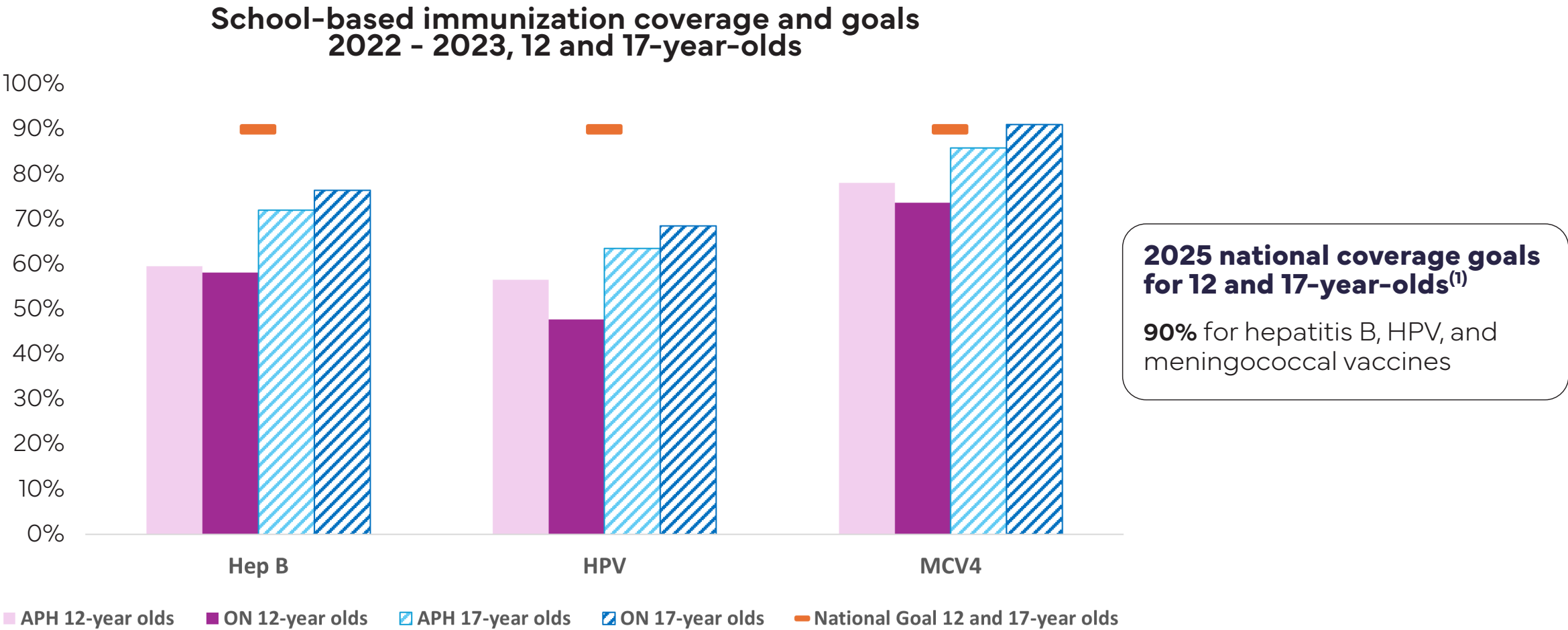
2025 national coverage goals for 7 and 17-year-olds⁽¹⁾:

95% 7-year-olds
for all childhood vaccines

95% 17-year-olds
for measles, mumps,
polio, and rubella vaccines

90% 17-year-olds
for diphtheria, pertussis,
and tetanus vaccines

School-based immunization coverage for the 2022 - 2023 school year was low in 12-year-olds, but still above the provincial rate. Meanwhile, immunizations in 17-year-olds was much higher, but still below the province⁽⁶⁾.



Most healthcare providers (HCPs) do not automatically report vaccines they administer to APH. Parents/guardians have to report their child's immunizations.

How can a parent or guardian report their child's immunization to APH?

- ▶ Email a copy of the record to immunizations@algotmapublichealth.com
- ▶ Bring a copy of the record to the front desk of any [APH office](#).
- ▶ Request their HCP to fax a copy of their immunization record to 705-541-5959
- ▶ Submit (or view) immunizations online at: www.algotmapublichealth.com/ICON





Adult immunizations

Vaccines are important throughout your life and many require boosters or annual vaccination into adulthood. Seniors are more susceptible to certain vaccine-preventable diseases, such as pneumococcal infections and shingles. A full schedule of recommended doses for each adult is available from the Ministry of Health.

Some vaccines may be recommended for certain high-risk groups in addition to the routine recommendation for adults. Algoma Public Health or your Health Care Provider can review your health history to see if you should receive further vaccines.

Did you know? Over **two-thirds** of shingles cases occur in individuals over 50 years of age⁽⁷⁾

You are at risk for developing shingles if you've ever had the chickenpox. Nearly **1 in 3** Canadians who have not been immunized develop shingles in their lifetime. The most common complication of shingles is long-term, debilitating nerve pain, that can severely impact your quality of life. Your risk of getting shingles **increases** with each year past the age of 50.

► Talk to your health care provider about getting your shingles vaccine if you are at least 50 or have a weakened immune system⁽⁶⁾.



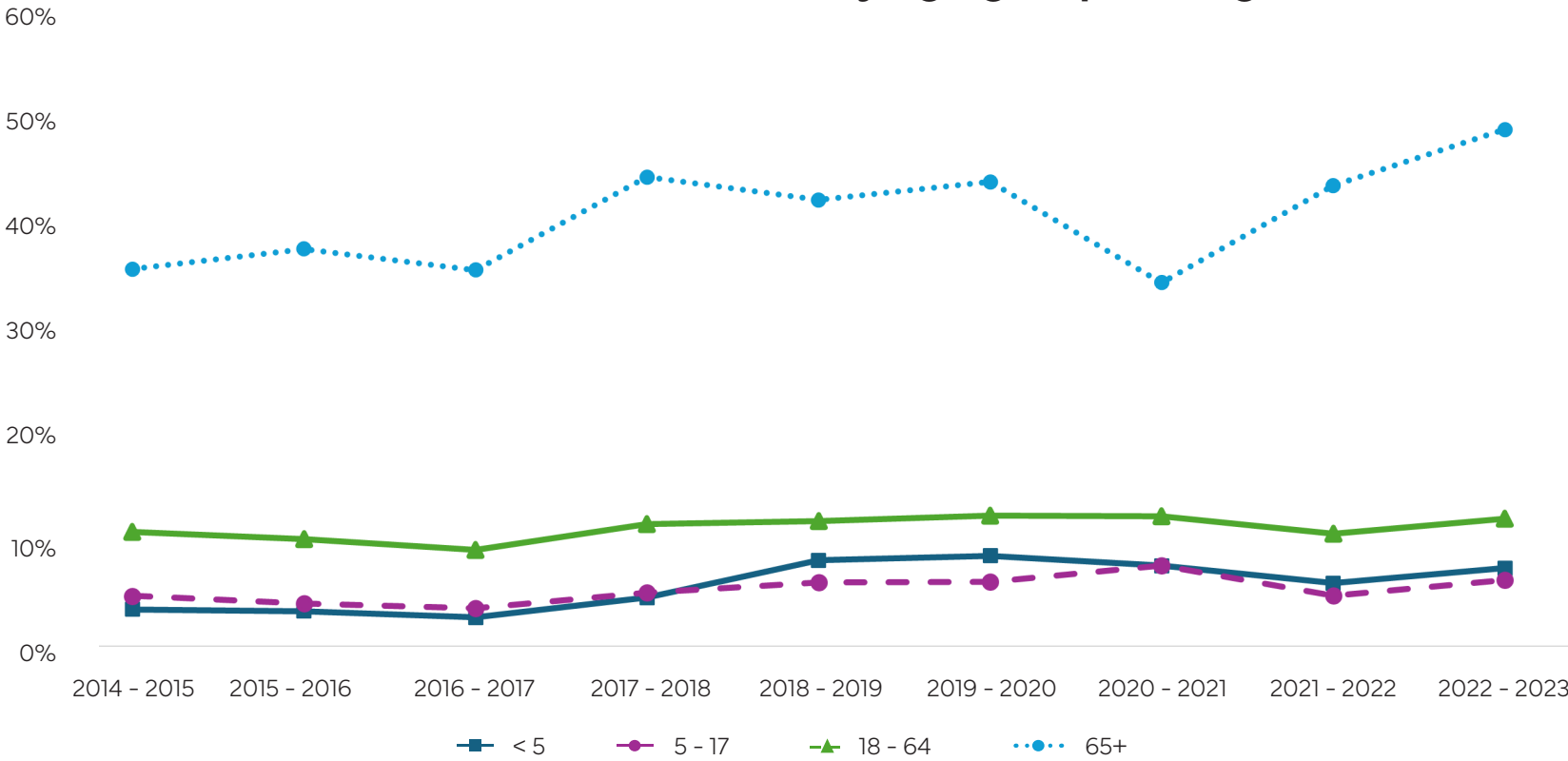
Influenza and COVID-19 immunizations

Influenza vaccines are recommended annually in the fall for all Ontario residents over 6 months of age. It's especially important for pregnant women, young children, adults aged 65 and over, and those with immunocompromised systems to get a flu shot.

About 50% of Algoma residents aged 65 or older recieved the flu vaccine during the 2022 - 2023 flu season, in comparison to just 7.4% of children under 5 years.

Overall, an estimated 20.5% of Algoma residents were vaccinated with a flu shot during the 2022 - 2023 flu season⁽⁸⁾.

Influenza immunization rate by age groups in Algoma



During the pandemic, public health agencies across the province ran mass COVID-19 immunization clinics to ensure that our communities and priority populations had access to vaccines. Since the pandemic, booster vaccines have helped maintain protection against the serious effects of COVID-19 infection.

- ▶ Nearly **80%** of Algoma’s population completed their primary series of COVID-19 immunization⁽⁹⁾
- ▶ Less than **50%** also received at least one booster dose⁽⁹⁾

Vaccine glossary

Vaccine product	Diseases covered by vaccine
Hib	Haemophilus influenza B
MCV4	Meningococcal disease
Men-C-C	Meningococcal disease
MMR	Measles, mumps, rubella
MMR-V	Measles, mumps, rubella, varicella
Tdap	Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis
Tdap-IPV	Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, polio
Varicella	Chicken Pox



References

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