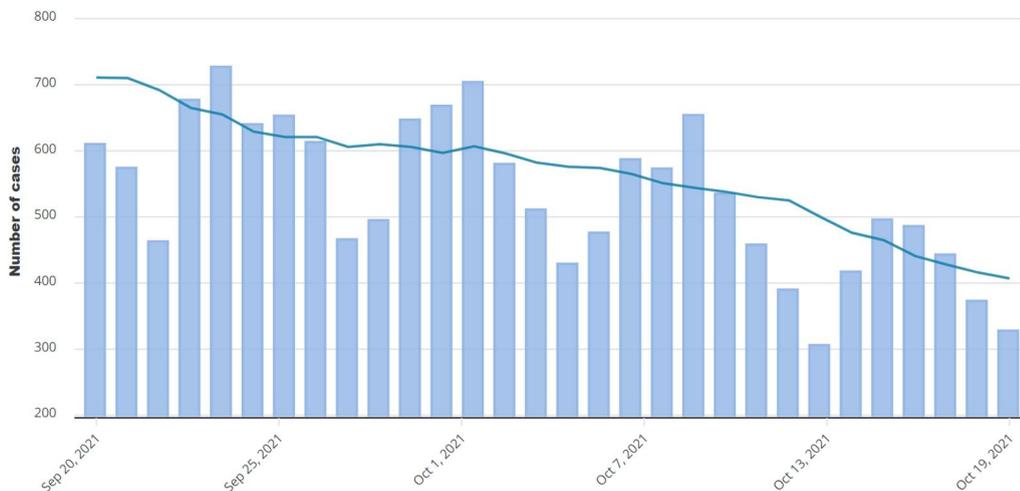
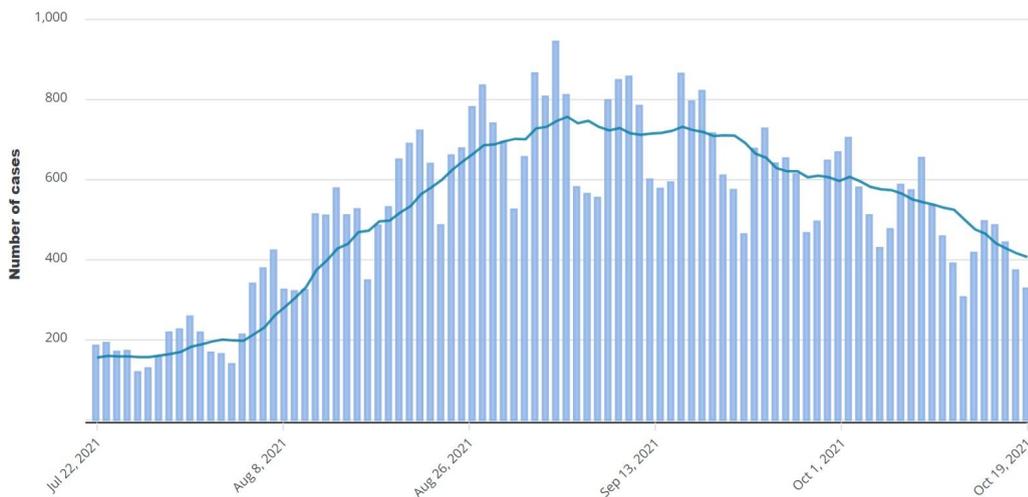


Answering Your Questions October 22, 2021

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Question: Is the last wave over? It seems like things are going back to normal.

It's hard to say when a wave is completely over, but we're getting there! Here is the most recent data from the Government of Ontario. The first graph shows the past 90 days and the second graph shows the past month. The line is the 7-day average and the bars are the daily case counts. As for a fifth wave, it's a matter of "when" and not "if", but with vaccines and vaccine passports, hopefully things will stay this way and we won't see another lockdown!



Source: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/data/case-numbers-and-spread>.

Under “New cases”, you can change the length of time shown on the graph.

Question: I can never reach Telehealth. The hold is longer than my booking and once my call gets through, the attendants have to answer my question because it’s not long enough.

You’re right, it can take a long time to be connected to a nurse, which can add to your stress about your health! You can share any comments and/or concerns about Telehealth, as well as ask questions, by contacting the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Click [here](#) to see the different ways you can contact them.

Keep in mind that the length of wait times for Telehealth vary throughout the day. Although you can’t predict the ideal time to call, personally I don’t call during break times for people who work a 9 to 5 job, such as at noon or shortly after 5 p.m.

If you have a health-related question, be sure to tell the attendant why you want to speak to a nurse at the beginning of the call so that you can be connected in a more time-efficient way.

At certain times of day, the receptionist/attendant will answer queries about services that are unrelated to a health assessment. Since receptionists aren’t qualified to give health advice, the reason that they’re answering your question is likely because it’s related to information about services (not because it’s not long enough).

These services might be helpful if you can’t get through to Telehealth:

- If you want information about healthcare services near you, you can call 311. If you prefer to look for healthcare services yourself online, click [here](#). Just enter the type of service that you want and an address, postal code, or city. This works everywhere in Ontario.
- If you’re interested in finding a family doctor, you can use [Health Care Connect](#). You will need an Ontario health card, so if you have one, have that ready. If you don’t have a health card, click [here](#) to learn how to get one. To register in this program, you cannot currently have a family doctor. If you want to end your relationship with your current family doctor and find a new one, either contact them or call ServiceOntario at 1-866-532-3161 / TTY 1-800-387-5559. This also works everywhere in Ontario.
- The Mental Health Helpline: 1-866-531-2600.
- If it’s a health emergency, call 911.

Sources:

1. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>
2. <https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/>
3. <https://www.ontario.ca/locations/health/>
4. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-family-doctor-or-nurse-practitioner>

Question: Can pets contract COVID-19? If so, are there any ways to prevent them from contracting it?

There have been some reports of people spreading COVID-19 to their pet cat or dog. However, we don't know many details about how their animals got infected.

If you have **no** COVID-19 symptoms, it's safe to spend time with your pet. The Government of Canada's website says that you and your pet can also go for walks, and besides keeping them on a leash, there aren't any other special precautions for protecting your pet from the general public.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms or are quarantining or isolating, the Government recommends that you avoid close contact with animals to keep them safe. This means that you should not: let them lick you, snuggle or kiss them, share food with them, let them sit on your lap, or let them sleep in your bed.

On top of that, you can practice good hygiene in these ways:

- wash your hands often, especially before and after touching animals, their food or their supplies;
- avoid coughing and sneezing on your animals;
- avoid touching your face with unwashed hands;
- keep your pet away from people and animals outside your household until you're no longer ill or isolating;
- have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick (if this isn't possible, wear a non-medical mask to care for your pet while you isolate);
- keep your cat indoors at all times;
- keep your dog in a private fenced area or ensure they're on a leash when you take them outside to go to the bathroom

For pets that live in or visit Long-Term Care homes, there are more precautions that should be followed. Click [here](#) to learn more.

Sources:

1. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/animals-covid-19.html>
2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/pets-long-term-care-homes.html>

Question: Do any COVID-19 symptoms impact how we go to the bathroom?

Yes, diarrhea is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. If you have ongoing issues with symptoms after 14 days of isolation, speak to your doctor or a pharmacist about medication.

It can be really helpful to talk to a pharmacist because they know over-the-counter products very well. Pharmacists are regulated health professionals just like nurses and doctors. You can talk to your pharmacist about over-the-counter symptom management.

Question: Are there alternative therapies/holistic approaches that can be used in replace of the covid vaccines?

People around the world are experimenting with traditional herbal medicine, and many studies are ongoing, but there is no evidence that any of these methods are effective. As of now, there is no alternative to the COVID-19 vaccines, which are both safe and effective.

As we saw with [ivermectin](#), throughout the pandemic, there has been a significant amount of misinformation about alternative ways to prevent and treat the virus. Unfortunately, some people have been harmed by these treatments, so please speak with a healthcare professional before trying anything new.

One week ago, there was an article about why “natural” products are not automatically safer or healthier than “unnatural” or synthetic drugs. This article was written by the United States’ National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, so it’s a great example of fact-checking information from a reliable source. Click [here](#) to read this article.

Sources:

1. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/covid-19-and-alternative-treatments-what-you-need-to-know>
2. https://www.nydp.ca/uploads/1/5/1/7/15170544/ivermectin_explained.pdf
3. <https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/know-science/natural-doesnt-mean-better>

Question: The city says the clinics are accessible, but they are not. Even if they have a ramp, they lack the support staff to help people once there.

Unfortunately, you’re completely right. Many people with disabilities have shared that clinics do not offer the support that they need, and this has been an ongoing barrier for people with disabilities who want to get vaccinated. In July, Toronto had a mass vaccination clinic that offered more accessibility support, and the City has just announced more clinics like this one for November 5th and 6th called Super Supportive Vaccine Clinics.

These clinics have support for people who:

- Have a fear of needles
- Need to sit down while waiting
- Need a quiet space to get vaccinated
- Need a companion with them as they get vaccinated
- Need an ASL interpreter

Here are the locations and dates of these clinics:

North Toronto (North York):

North York Seniors Centre, 21 Hendon Ave.

Saturday, November 6 and Sunday, November 7

From 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Southwest Toronto (Etobicoke):

St. Margaret's Anglican Church, 156 Sixth Street, Etobicoke

Friday, November 5 from 4 – 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 6 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

East Toronto (Danforth Village/Oakridge Area):

Oakridge Community Centre, 63 Pharmacy Avenue

Friday, November 5 from 4 – 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 6 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Northwest Toronto (Rexdale Area):

Elm Bank Community Centre, 10 Rampart Rd

Friday, November 5 from 4 – 8 p.m.

Saturday, November 6 from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Please feel free to share this information with anyone you know who could benefit from it!

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If you think you may be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, take the self-assessment at www.ontario.ca/coronavirus. Follow all directions from your medical provider or your local health unit at the following phone numbers:

Telehealth Ontario: 1-866-797-0000

Toronto Public Health: 416-338-7600

Peel Public Health: 905-799-7700

Durham Region Health Department: 905-668-7711

York Region Public Health: 1-877-464-9675