

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – February 3, 2023

Public Health Ontario’s Weekly COVID-19 Summary

Public Health Ontario (PHO) warns us to interpret these trends with caution because they are not entirely accurate. COVID-19 cases, contacts, and outbreaks are only being managed in high-risk populations and settings. There is also a delay in reporting, especially with severe outcomes and deaths. Reported case counts are a severe underestimate of the actual extent of COVID-19 infections in Ontario.

Last week, indicators for COVID-19 were lower overall compared to the previous week. The number of reported COVID-19 cases in Ontario was 5,005 compared to 5,233 the week before. Last week, there were 251 reported COVID-19-related hospitalizations, which is lower than the week before, and 38 reported COVID-19-related deaths, which is also lower than the week before.

The total number of confirmed, ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks in high-risk settings is 82, compared to 105 outbreaks the week before. The number of outbreaks decreased in Long-Term Care homes (from 25 to 24), retirement homes (from 29 to 18), and congregate living settings, such as group homes/supportive housing, shelters and correctional facilities (from 24 to 12). The number of outbreaks in hospitals increased slightly from 27 to 28.

Source:

1. https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/nCoV/epi/respiratory-virus-overview-ontario.pdf?rev=448a6bf1f6d3496db3e95406d2ca2653&sc_lang=en

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Kids & Vaccines Town Hall by ScienceUpFirst & Children’s Healthcare Canada

ScienceUpFirst, an initiative of the Canadian Association of Science Centres and Children's Healthcare Canada are joining forces on February 23 for National Kids and Vaccines Day 2023.

Routine vaccinations are critical for protection against a wide range of vaccine-preventable diseases. The rise of misinformation about vaccine safety and effectiveness has caused a dangerous reduction in the rate of vaccinated children - and not just COVID. Kids are not being protected against many of the diseases we’ve been immunizing against for decades, including Measles, Polio, and Hepatitis B to name a few.

Last year, they hosted the first-ever #KidsVaccinesDay. Join them for this second annual event where they bring together healthcare leaders and experts from across disciplines to help move the needle (pun intended) and promote vaccine confidence for Canada’s children.

Click [here](#) to register for the Zoom event on Thursday, February 23rd at 8:00 p.m. At this link, you can submit questions about immunizations for kids that you would like the panel to answer!

Source: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_HMeJezrS028PVkCVflKCO

WHO declares COVID-19 global emergency is NOT over

A pandemic isn't always a global emergency. Every three months, the emergency committee at the World Health Organization (WHO) meets to debate whether the COVID-19 pandemic is still a global public health emergency.

Last week, people were speculating whether the WHO would decide that the situation is not severe enough to be considered an emergency. However, on Monday, the director-general of the WHO and the emergency committee decided not to end the COVID-19 global public health emergency it declared three years ago.

As long as COVID-19 is a global emergency, there exists a legally-binding response among countries that are members of the WHO, including Canada. Emergency status allows the WHO to make temporary recommendations to countries to prevent or deal with the threat.

The committee recommended the WHO come up with some other way to make sure countries stay focused on COVID-19 after the formal emergency designation is called off.

To end the emergency status requires commitment from the WHO, member countries and international institutions to “developing and implementing sustainable, systematic, long-term prevention, surveillance, and control action plans,” the WHO said in a statement Monday.

The director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said, “there is no doubt that we’re in a far better situation now” compared to last year, but still, at least 170,000 people have died around the world in connection with COVID-19 in the past eight weeks.

He made these calls to action:

- Everyone in an at-risk group should get fully vaccinated
- Increase COVID-19 testing
- Increase using antiviral medication sooner
- Expand networks and collaboration between labs
- Fight against misinformation about the pandemic.
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“We remain hopeful that in the coming year, the world will transition to a new phase in which we reduce hospitalizations and deaths to the lowest possible level,” said Ghebreyesus.

Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, said that no matter what the WHO decided, Canada would continue to track cases, serious illnesses and deaths, as well as roll out vaccination campaigns.

This is a shortened version of a longer article published by CTV News. Click here to read the full version:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/who-declares-covid-19-global-emergency-isn-t-over-what-happens-next-1.6251770>

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The Burn: reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic through art

Toronto residents are invited to heal and cleanse through the restorative power of rising heat, ash, smoke and water. The Burn, an interactive art installation inspired by the universally sacred elements of fire and water, provides a sanctuary for comfort and care with rituals of intention setting, releasing and letting go.

On now until March 11, residents are invited to engage with The Burn's travelling vessels by setting healing intentions on wooden spheres. Following the tour, take part in a commemorative ceremony on Nathan Phillips Square on Saturday, March 11, where the wooden spheres will be ignited for a 24-hour burn. Ashes from The Burn will be harvested, mixed into soil and spread across city gardens to honour the spirit of our collective healing. More information is available at [Toronto.ca/TheBurn](https://toronto.ca/TheBurn).

This installation is part of Stronger TOgether, a program for Toronto residents to recognize and reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic. More information is available at [Toronto.ca/StrongerTOgether](https://toronto.ca/StrongerTOgether).

Source:

<https://www.toronto.ca/news/city-of-toronto-reflects-on-pandemic-response-three-years-after-torontos-first-confirmed-case-of-covid-19/>

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***These are just a few of the COVID-19 vaccine clinics happening in Toronto in February!
Click [here](#) to see more!***

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Request Drive-Through Vaccinations for Children with Disabilities in East Toronto

- South East Toronto Family Health Team (SETFHT) is offering drive-through vaccinations for children aged six months and older with disabilities.
 - Parents, caregivers and families who need this service should e-mail info@setfht.on.ca with their request.
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Toronto's City-Run Clinics

[Appointments](#) are strongly recommended at this time for each person being vaccinated. COVID vaccine appointments can be booked online or by calling 1-833-943-3900 (TTY 1-866-797-0007). City-run clinics are also currently accepting walk-ins.

Everyone aged 6 months and over can safely get the COVID-19, and flu vaccine at the same time. These locations are accessible. Please bring all required mobility devices with you. You don't need a health card, but you need to bring some form of identification with you. ([source](#))

- **Metro Hall:** 214 Wellington St. W., Monday to Thursday, noon to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Crossroads Plaza:** 2625 Weston Rd., Monday to Thursday, noon to 6 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **East York Town Centre/Thorncliffe Park Community Hub:** 45 Overlea Blvd., Tuesday to Friday, noon to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **1 Eglinton Square:** Tuesday to Friday, noon to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Cloverdale Mall:** 250 The East Mall, Tuesday to Friday, noon to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- **Mitchell Field Community Centre:** 89 Church Ave., Tuesday to Friday, noon to 6 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Accessibility/Accommodation at City-Run Clinics

All City-run clinics are able to offer accommodation. Each clinic has parking near the entrance, ramps, elevators, and wheelchairs. Staff are also on site at each clinic to support as necessary. Clients who need a care provider or service animal with them will be accommodated. There are also privacy rooms available upon request.

If you require an accommodation, alert a staff member upon arrival or at any time while at the clinic.

Vaccine Clinic Accommodation Request

You may also request an accommodation ahead of your appointment by filling out the Vaccine Accommodation Survey (click [here](#)). You will be asked the date and time of your vaccination appointment, and a public health nurse will contact you within two business days to confirm the details of your request.

Examples of accommodations they can provide include:

- The use of a private area in the clinic to receive the vaccine
- Using a guide to help navigate the clinic
- Access to a cot to lie down after you have received the vaccine
- Access to ASL interpretation (at least 48 hours' notice required)

If you need assistance filling out the survey or requesting accommodation please call Toronto Public Health at 416-338-7600 (TTY: 416-392-0658).

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January COVID-19 Wellness Hubs, COVID-19 Vaccination, and More from the Downtown East Toronto Ontario Health Team

For more information about all of these services, visit:

<https://regentparkchc.org/covid-19-vaccine-clinic/>

To book vaccine appointments, visit: bit.ly/40oakclinic.

Flu vaccines are available on **Tuesdays** at 200 Wellesley Street East, **Thursdays** at 465 Dundas Street East, and **Saturdays** at both 40 Oak Street and 200 Wellesley Street East (until supplies last).

Wellness Clinics

You can get COVID-19 vaccines and more at Wellness Clinics.

These clinics are being held **every Tuesday** from 1:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and **every Saturday** from 10:00 AM to 4:30 PM at The Corner (200 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, ON).

The recommended interval to receive a booster is at least 6 months from your last dose, regardless of how many boosters you have already received.

Appointments and walk ins/drop ins are welcome.

Cold, Flu, and COVID-19 Testing and Medication Clinics

You can talk to a clinician about information on COVID-19 medications, including your options and eligibility, at Cold, Flu, and COVID-19 Testing and Medication Clinics.

These clinics are being held **every Wednesday** from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Fred Victor building at 40 Oak Street, Toronto, ON. They are also being held **every Tuesday** from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at The Corner (200 Wellesley Street East, Toronto, ON).

Walk ins/drop ins only. Limited availability. First come first served. Identification is not required to get your vaccine. But if you have an OHIP card or other identification, please bring it with you as it will help with the registration process.

Note: They do not perform COVID-19 Tests for travel purposes.

More information:

<https://regentparkchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/COVID-19-Testing-Treatment.pdf>

Wellness Hubs

These hubs are for anyone living South of Bloor Street, East of Church Street, North of the lake, and West of the river. These clinics are multilingual and accessible. Privacy stations are available. People with no fixed address are welcome.

Services Offered:

- Get free COVID-19 Test Kits (Rapid Antigen Tests)
- Get COVID-19 vaccine and booster (for eligible people 6 months and up)
- Catch up on adult and child immunization
- Measure your blood pressure

You can also connect with staff to explore other health services that you could be referred to.

These clinics are being held **every Thursday** from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at 465 Dundas Street and **AND every Saturday** from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Fred Victor building at 40 Oak Street, Toronto, ON.

The recommended interval to receive a booster is at least 6 months from your last dose, regardless of how many boosters you have already received.

Appointments and walk ins/drop ins are welcome.

For more information and to book an appointment, leave a message at: (416) 364 2261 ext. 2306 (they will call you back) or visit: <https://regentparkchc.org/covid-19-vaccine-clinic/>.

More information about Thursdays:

<https://regentparkchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Wellness-Hub-Thursdays@RPCHC-Nov.pdf>

More information about Saturdays:

<https://regentparkchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Saturday.pdf>

SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics

SickKids Hospital is hosting weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinics for any infant/child aged six months to under five years who requires accommodations due to medical complexity, developmental disorder, mobility challenges, communication, behavioural and other specialized needs (including significant fear of needles).

This clinic will happen each Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. More dates and times are expected to become available soon.

It's by appointment only. To make an appointment, you need to be referred through your doctor. For any questions regarding patient referrals, contact mobile.vaccination@sickkids.ca.

Do you have questions or concerns about the COVID-19 vaccine for children? Book an appointment with the SickKids COVID-19 Vaccine Consult Service. Visit sickkids.ca/vaccineconsult to book an appointment!

Health Connect Ontario - 811

Connect with a Registered Nurse day or night for free, secure and confidential health advice.

Check your symptoms, get health advice with referrals to local & specialized services as needed and access to a medical library. Access safe, high-quality care and avoid unnecessary visits to the emergency room. This service is an easy way to get connected to care you or your loved ones need, but it does not replace your other touch point with your health care provider. In a medical emergency call 911 immediately.

OHIP not needed. Anonymous calls accepted.

Refugee Health Hotline calls are now redirected automatically to 811

Online (including live chat): Ontario.ca/healthconnectontario

Call: 811 or toll free TTY line 1-866-797-0007

Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccine booking portal:

Those eligible for a vaccine can book here: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>.

Or by phone at: 1-833-943-3900.

For general information about vaccines, call: 1-888-999-6488.

In Toronto? Here are two transportation options to go to your vaccine appointment:

1. The Ontario Community Support Association's Accessible Drive-to-Vaccines program provides door-to-door rides to vaccination sites for people with disabilities, including seniors with mobility issues. You must have a vaccination appointment booked. You need to request a ride at least 48 hours before the appointment. To book, call 211 or click [here](#) to request an appointment online.

2. Wheel-Trans is committed to providing vaccine rides to the elderly and people with disabilities in Toronto. Wheel-Trans is offering individual rides to City-run mass vaccination sites, pharmacies, doctor's offices, and clinics that are giving out vaccines. Customers may be joined by one Support Person on their Wheel-Trans ride.

You may be eligible for Wheel-Trans service if your disability prevents you from using the TTC's conventional transit for all or part of your trip.

If you are not yet a Wheel-Trans customer, and you think you may qualify for Wheel-Trans service, you are invited to apply by calling Wheel-Trans Customer Service at 416-393-4111, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Existing Wheel-Trans customers can book their rides to and from their vaccine appointments by calling Wheel-Trans Reservations at 416-393-4222, seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. or through the Wheel-Trans Self-Booking Website. Access the website by clicking here: <https://mywheel-trans.ttc.ca/SelfBooking2020/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fSelfBooking2020>.

Upcoming Events:

North Yorkers

The Communication Enrichment Class (ongoing)

The class runs virtually on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. Class is on pause for the holiday season and will resume on January 10, 2022. You can find the online blog at <https://nydpcec.wordpress.com/> where class activities will be posted before each class. If you or someone you know has a communication disability and may be interested in participating in the class, please contact Jessica, our Manager of Client Services via email at jessica.nydp@gmail.com.

March of Dimes

One to One Peer Support Program

The One to One Peer Support program is still running. No one understands quite like somebody who has lived the same experience. Our Peer Support program pairs caregivers with peers who are also experienced in caregiving and can offer practical advice and support by phone or a video chat. Contact Angie Clark by email at aclark@marchofdimes.ca or call 1-905-301-8114 for more information or to get connected.

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If you or someone you know uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and requires resources related to COVID-19, please contact Jessica (jessica.nydp@gmail.com) and she can assist you in accessing and/or creating various communication tools.

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:

Health Connect Ontario: 811
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

Please refer to previous updates as lots of important information has been provided that may still be relevant. If you have any questions or require more information on how you can protect yourself and those around you from the COVID-19 virus, please contact our Senior Manager of Client Services/Lead AAC Facilitator Jessica at 416-222-4448 or jessica.nydp@gmail.com.

Clients wondering what's next, most people have been vaccinated.
RATs coming back? Kids are tired of that, wearing masks in classrooms.