

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – October 21, 2022

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.

This week, the number of reported cases in Ontario increased to 9,332 from 8,997 last week. A gradual increase in cases and percent positivity has been happening over the past 5 weeks.

This week, hospital admissions and deaths decreased. There were 491 reported hospital admissions (up from 464 last week) and 67 reported deaths (down from 7 last week).

The total number of outbreaks in high-risk settings decreased from 232 last week to 204 this week. The number of outbreaks decreased in Long-Term Care homes, retirement homes, and congregate living (includes group homes/supportive housing and shelters). The number of outbreaks in hospitals increased.

Source:

1. https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/nCoV/epi/covid-19-weekly-epi-summary-report.pdf?sc_lang=en

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Important Updates to COVID-19 Rules in Long-Term Care Homes

Last Friday, the Ministry of Long-Term Care made these changes to Long-Term Care homes:

- It’s no longer mandatory to screen visitors and caregivers for COVID-19 (but it is still recommended). This means that they are no longer required to confirm in person or online that they are symptom free (which they call “active screening”). Instead, there will be signs with COVID-19 symptoms (which they call “passive screening”).
- Residents will be asked if they have COVID-19 symptoms daily, but testing is no longer required unless they have symptoms. This means that residents are no longer required to be tested for COVID-19 when they return from an absence.
- Masks are no longer mandatory when visitors or caregivers are alone with a resident in their room. Masks are still required when they enter and move within the building. Masks are still required at all times for Long-Term Care staff, except for when they are eating.
- The province removed its limitation on four visitors (including caregivers) per resident at a time for indoor visits. Long-Term Care homes can go back to setting their own visitor policy.

“Our government is protecting our Long-Term Care homes by investing in Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC), hiring and retaining nurses and PSWs, and increasing daily hours of care for residents,” said Jake Roseman, who is a representative of the Minister of Long-Term Care. “Additionally, we are now offering COVID-19 bivalent booster vaccines to Long-Term Care residents, which will add a further layer of protection against the virus.”

In June, Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Kieran Moore said he would recommend keeping the Long-Term Care mask mandate in place until at least the summer of 2023.

Roseman said the new guidance follows Moore’s advice.

Sources:

1. https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-guidance-document-long-term-care-homes-ontario#Physical_distancing
2. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ont-ltc-masks-1.6622221>

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 needle phobia).

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](https://ontario.ca/healthconnectontario)

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

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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.

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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 is running virtually on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m. 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.