

Ontario to lift most mask mandates

This document was prepared on March 11, 2022 by Nicole Volpe.

Nicole works for North Yorkers for Disabled Persons as an Outreach Communication Facilitator. She can be reached at nicole.nydp@gmail.com.

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I heard Ontario will be lifting mask mandates, is this true?

The province of Ontario has announced that they will begin lifting mask mandates for many indoor public settings as of March 21, 2022. This announcement was made on Wednesday March 10, by Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's chief medical officer of health.

"With the peak of Omicron behind us, Ontario has been able to cautiously and gradually move through its reopening milestones. The majority of public health and workplace safety measures have now been lifted, and key public health indicators continue to improve or remain stable," said Dr. Kieran Moore during the Wednesday Press release, "As we continue on this path, we are able to take a more balanced and long-term approach to Ontario's pandemic response."

He continued, "As a society, we must remain kind, considerate and respectful toward those who continue wearing a mask. We must also expect indicators, such as cases and hospitalizations, to increase slightly as Ontarians increasingly interact with one another. However, thanks to our high vaccination rates and natural immunity, as well as the arrival of antivirals, Ontario has the tools necessary to manage the impact of the virus. While this does not signal that COVID-19 has disappeared or that the pandemic is over, it does mean that we have come to a place where we know what we need to do to manage this virus and to keep each other safe. We need to remain vigilant. We need to stay home when sick. And, most importantly, we need to get vaccinated and

boosted. Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19 and the best protection for the progress we have made.”

Masks mandates will remain in place for high-risk settings such as long-term care, retirement homes, hospitals, shelters, congregate care living settings, public transit and jails. However, the mandates will be lifted for most social settings such as large event spaces, restaurants, gyms and schools.

We are seeing many concerns regarding the mandate lifting for classrooms, as the vaccine rate is currently lower in children. However, many are pleased with this decision as well, as it will provide a bit of normality to the lives of young Canadians.

At this time the province has already lifted most restrictions in public settings, with all remaining restrictions expected to be lifted come the end of April. They have left the decision up to business owners to make an ultimate plan for whether or not they will require proof of vaccination in their work places. The mask mandate will also fall into this category, as many businesses have already announced that regardless of what Ontario has decided, they will be keeping the mandate in place to protect their members of staff, as well as their clientele.

What other restrictions are being lifted by the end of April?

March 14 – Mandatory vaccination policies end

- Lifting of mandatory vaccination policy for employees in long-term care homes
- The directive which required that unvaccinated workers in hospitals and other high-risk healthcare settings are to be regularly tested with rapid antigen tests, will be lifted
- Letters of instruction to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility are revoked. This will mean that those sectors will no longer be required to have vaccination policies that, at a minimum, require unvaccinated workers to partake in an educational course on the benefits of vaccination

March 21 – Most mask requirements lifted

- Mask mandates will be dropped in most public settings, except public transit, long-term care and retirement homes, health-care settings, congregate care settings, shelters and jails

- Mask mandates in schools, as well as on-site symptom screening will end
- Requirements for businesses to enforce masking are removed, including screening and they will not be required to have a COVID-19 safety plan

March 28 – Reopening Ontario Act expires

- The Reopening Ontario Act expires, however the remaining orders associated with the act are extended for 30 days

April 27 – All remaining mask requirements are lifted

- Mask mandates will be removed in all remaining settings
- Any remaining orders under the Reopening Ontario Act will expire
- Any and all remaining health-care directives are lifted. This includes the use of N95 masks when working with suspected COVID-19 patients. The Ministry of Health will continue to direct any recommendations to health-care workers to wear personal protective equipment, and this will likely still include N95 masks

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Sources:

- 1: [COVID-19: Expert says it may be 'too early' to lift mask mandates | CTV News](#)
- 2: [Ontario mask mandate: Come March 21, the choice is in individuals' hands | CTV News](#)
- 3: [Statement from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health | Ontario Newsroom](#)
- 4: [When is Ontario lifting all COVID-19 restrictions? | CTV News](#)

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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