

Coronavirus: COVID-19

Current Update – January 26, 2024

Public Health Ontario's Weekly COVID-19 Summary

The number of reported COVID-19 cases on January 20, 2023 was 2,337. The total number of deaths caused by COVID-19 reported in the week was 32. The total number of covid-19 outbreaks in Ontario during this period were 79. Total number of hospital admissions was 113.

If testing positive for COVID-19 isn't annoying enough, new research found it can also make you miserable and irritable. A team of researchers from Weill Cornell Medicine, Columbia University and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center uncovered how the virus can infect brain cells related to mood, movement and stress, leading to an interruption of dopamine production.

The scientists utilized human stem cells to create various cell types found in the human body. That allowed them to study how SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for Covid-19, affects different cells. The study showed that about 5% of dopamine neurons can be infected by the coronavirus, leading to senescence and inflammation. The infection rate of dopamine neurons isn't as high as lung cells, the virus's main target, but even a small population of infected cells can potentially have a severe effect. It is important to note that while most people may be exposed to COVID, not all are vulnerable to dopamine neuron damage.

Genetics and the severity of the disease factor into the neurological risk, though the scientists recommended that larger human population studies further explore the issue. Given that dopamine neuron senescence is a characteristic of Parkinson's disease, the researchers suggested monitoring individuals with long COVID for an increased risk of developing Parkinson's-related symptoms.

Sources:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Infectious-Disease/Respiratory-Virus-Tool>

<https://torontosun.com/health/unexpected-result-covid-19-makes-you-miserable-by-draining-dopamine>

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 healthcare 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): <https://health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/chat-online>

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.

Upcoming Events:

North Yorkers - The Communication Enrichment Class (ongoing)

The class runs 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 jdunn@nydp.ca

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.

If you or someone you know uses Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), and requires resources related to COVID-19, please contact Jessica (jdunn@nydp.ca) 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 jdunn@nydp.ca.