

Coronavirus: COVID-19

Current Update – April 12, 2024

Public Health Ontario’s Weekly COVID-19 Summary

The number of reported COVID-19 cases on April 6, 2024 was 689. The total number of deaths caused by COVID-19 reported in the week was 4. The total number of covid-19 outbreaks in Ontario during this period were 31. The average daily hospital bed occupancy reported during the week was 249.

Researchers at Stanford Medicine say that immune cells in the lungs known as interstitial macrophages are critical in the development of severe—and potentially deadly—COVID. Their findings, published this week in the *Journal of Experimental Medicine*, showed that these cells which are located deep in the lungs and normally protective, morph into virus producers when infected with SARS-CoV-2. Once infected the cells release inflammatory and scar-producing chemical signals that can lead to the development of pneumonia and damage the lung tissue to the point where the virus and the secreted substances can break out of the lungs and spread throughout the body.

The research suggests new approaches to help prevent COVID from becoming a life-threatening condition. It also showed why monoclonal antibodies aren’t very effective and only typically work when given very early in the course of the infection, when the virus was still in the upper airways but hadn’t yet infected lung tissue. “The critical step, we think, is when the virus infects interstitial macrophages, triggering a massive inflammatory reaction that can flood the lungs and spread infection and inflammation to other organs,” said co-senior author Mark Krasnow, MD, PhD, professor of biochemistry and the executive director of the Vera Moulton Wall Center for pulmonary vascular disease. While blocking this step could be an effective method to treat COVID and represent a significant advance, the researchers noted it is unknown how to block the route the virus takes to get into the cells and better understanding of this alternative mechanism is needed.

Sources:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Data-and-Analysis/Infectious-Disease/Respiratory-Virus-Tool>
<https://www.insideprecisionmedicine.com/topics/coronavirus/researchers-identify-specific-lung-cells-implicated-in-severe-covid/>

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.