

## **Coronavirus: COVID-19**

Current Update – December 15, 2023

### **Public Health Ontario’s Weekly COVID-19 Summary**

The number of reported COVID-19 cases on December 9, 2023 was 4,062. The total number of deaths caused by COVID-19 reported in the week was 40. The total number of covid-19 outbreaks in Ontario during this period were 175. Total number of hospital admissions was 170.

ARS-CoV-2, the airborne virus that causes COVID-19, is spreading out of control, sickening adults and children alike. We continue to see patients with COVID-19 as infection rates hold steady across our region. We’re averaging about 15-20 COVID inpatients per day, some in the ICU. Meanwhile, we’ve now hit peak RSV season and flu cases are beginning to rise in the area. One day last week we had more than 580 inpatients, a near record.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the post COVID-19 condition, commonly referred to as long COVID, affects approximately 10-20 percent of people who get COVID-19. Sufferers experience a myriad of “mid- and long-term effects after they recover from their initial illness.” The most common symptoms associated with long COVID include fatigue, breathlessness and cognitive dysfunction.

Even mild cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection are at risk of becoming long COVID, and these results suggest the threat increases with multiple infections. Overcoming it once doesn’t necessarily protect you from subsequent cases that are worse. Best to avoid it altogether.

A recent Statistics Canada report reveals that approximately 3.5 million Canadian adults “reported experiencing long-term symptoms following a COVID-19 infection.” And nearly half of those with long COVID reported not experiencing any improvement in symptoms over time. Only by putting in place pandemic mitigation measures — vaccination, wearing N95 respirators, systematically improving ventilation and filtration of air in all public spaces, and educating the public - can we begin to even hope to reverse this very troubling trend in post-COVID complications for our society.

### **Sources:**

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

<https://www.thewhig.com/opinion/covid-19-overwhelms-ontario>

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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 ([jdunn@nydp.ca](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:jdunn@nydp.ca).