

## **Coronavirus: COVID-19**

Current Update – December 22, 2023

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

The number of reported COVID-19 cases on December 16, 2023 was 4,420. The total number of deaths caused by COVID-19 reported in the week was 22. The total number of covid-19 outbreaks in Ontario during this period were 163. Total number of hospital admissions was 198.

Canadians raced to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in the first years of the pandemic, but data suggests there's far less of a rush to get the latest shots available this fall. Federal figures show only 15 percent of the population aged five and up had received an updated vaccine by Dec. 3. And while older age groups had higher uptake rates, more than half of higher-risk older adults still hadn't gotten a dose by early December, either.

Medical experts say seniors and other higher-risk individuals could leave themselves more vulnerable to serious illness if they skip these updated shots. Less than a third of Canadians in their 60s have had the newest vaccine, along with roughly 44 per cent of people in their 70s, and 48 per cent of those aged 80 and older.

The virus which causes Covid is constantly changing over time and sometimes this leads to new variants developing. Just this week, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced yet another variant of interest known as JN.1, an Omicron offshoot that's rapidly spreading around the world. (WHO officials said the latest batch of vaccines are expected to maintain protection against serious illness and death from this variant as well.) The rapid spread of JN.1 indicates that it may be more easily spread

### **Sources:**

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

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2023/12/19/jn-1-symptoms-covid-variant/71971287007/>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-flu-covid-respiratory-illness-december-19/>

## **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) .