

Coronavirus: COVID-19

Current Update – December 29, 2023

Public Health Ontario's Weekly COVID-19 Summary

Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. Viruses are tiny microbes that survive by invading other living cells. These cells become host cells to the virus, which multiplies inside of them. They can then spread to new cells around the body. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) first identified in 2019. Flu is caused by infection with a flu virus (influenza viruses). Both SARS-CoV-2 and the flu virus primarily spread through person-to-person contact. Tiny droplets containing the viruses can pass from someone with the infection to someone else, typically through the nose and mouth via coughing and sneezing.

COVID-19 can cause more severe illness in some people, and those infected with COVID-19 may take longer to show symptoms and may be contagious for longer periods of time. Both viruses can be spread by people who don't show any signs of being sick. You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19 by the symptoms alone because they have some of the same signs and symptoms. Specific testing is needed to tell what the illness is and to confirm a diagnosis. Having a medical professional administer a specific test that detects both flu and COVID-19 allows you to get diagnosed and treated for the specific virus you have more quickly.

Getting treated early for COVID-19 and flu can reduce your risk of getting very sick. Testing can also reveal if someone has both flu and COVID-19 at the same time, although this is uncommon. People with flu and COVID-19 at the same time can have more severe disease than people with either flu or COVID-19 alone.

Sources:

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

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/coronavirus-vs-flu#causes>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>

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.