

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – April 26 2021

As of April 26th, 2021, Canada has a total of 1, 178, 987 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario has 445, 351 cases and Toronto has 141, 625 cases.

Ontario reports just over 3,500 new COVID-19 cases, positivity rate highest in more than one year

Today, Ontario is recording an additional 3, 510 COVID-19 cases, down from yesterday's 3, 947 cases and Saturday's 4, 094 cases. At the same time, the Ministry of Health said the province's positivity rate is now 10.9%. This is the highest that number has been since April 2020, when testing capacity was far lower and the positivity rate hit 17%.

Of today's new cases, there are 1, 015 in Toronto, 909 in Peel Region, 391 in York Region, 244 in Durham Region, 206 in Ottawa, and 143 in Halton. Of the 2, 271 COVID-19 patients in Ontario's hospitals, 877 are in Intensive Care Units and 605 are breathing with the help of a ventilator.

In the last 24 hours, 24 more people have died due to the virus. On Sunday, Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown confirmed that a 13-year-old girl from Brampton, Ont. has died after contracting COVID-19. She is the youngest person in the province who has died from the virus.

Provincial officials are reporting an additional 2, 030 confirmed cases of the UK variant, 4 cases of the South African variant and negative 2 cases of the Brazilian variant. In total, scientists have confirmed 54, 436 cases of the UK variant in Ontario.

Today's epidemiology report doesn't mention the B.1.617 variant, originally found in India, despite the fact that Public Health Ontario said on Friday that at least 36 cases have been confirmed in the province. It is not clear if more cases of this variant have been found since then.

In the past 24 hours, 69, 308 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine were given out. On Sunday, 99,535 doses were administered. So far, over 4.6 million Ontarians have received at least one dose while 361, 166 people have received both doses.

Source:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-reports-just-over-3-500-new-covid-19-cases-positivity-rate-highest-in-more-than-one-year-1.5402328>

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Summary of recent updates: Non-emergency and non-urgent surgeries postponed, AstraZeneca age eligibility lowered, and arrival of single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines

Non-emergency and non-urgent surgeries postponed across Ontario

As of last Tuesday, hospitals in the province are required to postpone all non-emergent surgeries and non-urgent procedures immediately. The order does not apply to pediatric specialty hospitals. This order came from Dr. David Williams, Ontario's chief medical officer of health.

The order states: "Clinicians are in the best position to determine what are urgent and emergent surgeries and procedures in their specific health practice and should rely on evidence and guidance where available."

The decision on postponement of surgeries "should be made using processes that are fair and transparent to all patients." Procedures like cancer surgeries and organ transplants could be affected. Earlier this month, the province also issued emergency orders that give hospitals the authority to transfer patients to another hospital without their consent.

"This decision will be closely monitored on an ongoing basis with the intention of bringing on surgical capacity as soon as safely possible," a spokesperson for Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott said in a statement to CP24.

Source:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-s-top-doctor-issues-directive-to-cease-all-non-emergency-surgeries-immediately-1.5397319>

AstraZeneca age eligibility lowered

For some time now, Health Canada has authorized the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine for anyone 18 years of age and older. However, the National Advisory Committee on Immunizations (NACI) recommended that the vaccine be given only to those 55 and older while they researched and evaluated evidence about rare blood clots.

Ontario had been following NACI's recommendation up until last week when the provincial government lowered the age threshold for AstraZeneca to anyone who is 40 years old or older. Last Tuesday was the first day that people who are 40 and older could book an AstraZeneca vaccine appointment at a pharmacy. As a result, last Tuesday also marked a new record for the most vaccines given in one day in the province.

On Friday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (age 49) and his wife Sophie Gregoire Trudeau (age 46) North Yorkers for Disabled Persons, Inc. Updated April 26, 2021

received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine at a Rexall pharmacy in Ottawa.

On that same day, NACI announced that it is changing its recommendation based on its research. NACI vice-chair Dr. Shelley Deeks said: “NACI recommends that the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine may be offered to individuals 30 years of age and older, without contraindications, if the individual does not wish to wait for an mRNA vaccine, and the benefits outweigh the risks.”

Ontario Health Minister Christine Elliott’s office made a statement that the province will continue to administer AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine to those 40 years of age and older. A spokesperson for Elliot’s office said that Ontario welcomes the recommendation to lower the minimum age, but the province currently does not have enough vaccines to do so.

Health Canada stands by their statement that the AstraZeneca vaccine is safe and effective, and that any potential risks are greatly outweighed by the benefits of being immunized against COVID-19.

Sources:

- 1.<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-to-lower-age-eligibility-for-astrazeneca-vaccine-to-40-1.5392503>
- 2.<https://globalnews.ca/news/7783658/justin-trudeau-gets-covid-vaccine-astrazeneca/>
- 3.<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/canadians-aged-30-and-older-can-be-offered-astrazeneca-vaccine-national-vaccine-panel-says-1.5399901>
- 4.<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-keeping-astrazeneca-shots-to-those-aged-40-for-now-due-to-supply-issues-1.5400050>

Arrival of single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines

The federal government announced that, this week, Canada will receive its very first shipment of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines. This vaccine only requires one dose, unlike the two-dose Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca vaccines.

The delivery of 300, 000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is expected to be in provinces and ready to administer in early May.

NACI has yet to issue any guidance around the use of the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which Health Canada has also approved for use in anyone 18 years of age and older.

Sources:

- 1.<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/canada-to-get-1-9m-vaccine-doses-this-week-including-first-johnson-johnson-shots-1.5402117>
- 2.<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/canadians-aged-30-and-older-can-be-offered-astrazeneca-vaccine-national-vaccine-panel-says-1.5399901>

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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.

In Toronto? Here's a safe transportation option to go to your vaccine appointment:

Wheel-Trans is committed to providing vaccine rides to the elderly and people with disabilities in Toronto. Wheel-Trans is offering individual rides to City-run mass vaccination sites, pharmacies, doctor's offices and clinics that are giving out vaccines. Customers may be joined by one Support Person on their Wheel-Trans ride.

You may be eligible for Wheel-Trans service if your disability prevents you from using the TTC's conventional transit for all or part of their trip.

If you are not yet a Wheel-Trans customer, and you think you may qualify for Wheel-Trans service, you are invited to apply by calling Wheel-Trans Customer Service at 416-393-4111, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Existing Wheel-Trans customers can book their rides to and from their vaccine appointments by calling Wheel-Trans Reservations at 416-393-4222, seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. or through the Wheel-Trans Self-Booking Website. Access the website by clicking here: <https://mywheel-trans.ttc.ca/SelfBooking2020/Login?ReturnUrl=%2fSelfBooking2020>.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

March of Dimes

Caregiver Webinars

Caregiver Connection Group – Caregiver conversation series – 10 weeks

Date: Starting Thursday, March 4th, at 2:00pm – every Thursday, join anytime

To register for any or all sessions: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/march-of-dimes-canada-caregiver-conversation-series-tickets-142228614615?aff=ebsoporgprofile>

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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 Sarah (sarah.nydp@gmail.com) 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:

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 back 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 Outreach

Communication Facilitator Sarah, at 416-222-4448 or

sarah.nydp@gmail.com