

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – June 15 2021

As of June 15th, 2021, Canada has a total of 1,403,689 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario has 540,426 cases and Toronto has 168,880 cases.

Ontario has fewer than 300 new COVID-19 cases, lowest daily case count since September

The province is reporting 296 new cases today, down from 447 new cases yesterday. The last time the daily case count was below 300 was on September 17, which had 293 new infections. Of today's cases, there are 62 in Peel Region, 60 in Toronto, 15 in York Region, and 12 in Durham Region.

The seven-day average of new cases is 478, down from 703 one week ago. Also, the positivity rate is 2.3%, down from 2.8% yesterday.

Of the 433 people in hospital due to the disease, 409 are in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) due to the virus, and 215 are breathing with the help of a ventilator.

Of the variants of concern, there are 678 new cases of the B.1.1.7 variant (also known as the U.K. variant or Alpha variant) and two more cases of P.1 variant (first identified in Brazil).

More than 11.5 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine have been given out so far, and over 2 million people have received both doses! In the past 24 hours, the province has given out 184,989 doses.

Source:

1. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-reports-fewer-than-300-new-covid-19-cases-marking-lowest-single-day-tally-since-september-1.5470900>

New studies on vaccines' effectiveness against the Delta variant

The Delta variant has been found in 74 countries. A lot of research is being done on how much vaccines can protect us against it.

Reports suggest that the Delta variant is 60% more transmissible than the original COVID-19 virus. In Ontario, Dr. Barabara Yaffe, associate chief medical officer of health for the province, said

that “It is about one-and-a-half times more transmissible than the B.1.1.7 or Alpha strain.”

Since the Delta variant spreads more easily, it can cause an exponential jump in case numbers. In India, where this variant was first identified, there were about 400,000 new cases a day in May. These cases were believed to be caused by this variant.

Recently, the U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that “We’re seeing cases growing by about 64% per week and in the worst affected areas, it’s doubling every week.” Because of this, the U.K. is delaying its reopening by more than a month, shifting the new date to July 19.

Two new studies released yesterday say that vaccines do offer protection against the Delta variant. One was released by Public Health England and one was published in the Lancet.

The first one looked at how effective the vaccines were at keeping those with the Delta variant from being hospitalized, since a study from Scotland claims that this variant almost doubles a person’s risk of needing to be hospitalized compared to other strains of the virus.

The study found that after one dose, AstraZeneca was 71% effective, and Pfizer was 94% effective against the Delta variant. After two doses, AstraZeneca was 92% effective, while Pfizer was 96% effective. “This evidence of the effectiveness of two doses against variants shows just how crucial it is to get your second jab,” Matt Hancock, Health and Social Care Secretary, said in a press release.

The second study, which was done in Scotland, looked at how effective vaccines were at preventing COVID-19 infection across both the Delta variant and the Alpha variant (which was first identified in the U.K.).

The study found that 14 days after receiving the second dose, Pfizer offered 79% effectiveness at preventing infection with the Delta variant, compared to 92% effectiveness at preventing the Alpha variant. The AstraZeneca vaccine offered 60% effectiveness at preventing the Delta variant after two doses, compared to 73% effectiveness at preventing the Alpha variant.

Experts still say our best protection against the virus and its variants is to get more people to receive two doses, before this highly transmissible variant spreads further.

As of yesterday morning, some Ontario residents are able to reschedule their second dose appointment to be much sooner if they live in 7 hotspots where the Delta variant (first identified in India) is spreading. If you live anywhere in Peel, Toronto, Halton, Porcupine, Waterloo, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph or York, you are eligible to make an appointment through the provincial booking system, pharmacies, and local public health booking systems.

Sources:

1. <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/vaccines-effective-at-preventing-hospitalization-from-delta-variant-studies-suggest-1.5470525>

2. <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-will-begin-accelerating-second-covid-19-vaccine-doses-in-7-delta-variant-hot-spots-1.5464242>

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 Webinar

Scams – Protect Yourself Against Fraud

Date: Monday, June 21st at 2:00 pm.

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/cra-scams-protect-yourself-against-fraud-registration-154465022039?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Caregiver Connection Group

Caregiver Conversation Series

Date: Thursdays at 2:00pm (ongoing)

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/march-of-dimes-canada-caregiver-conversation-series-tickets-142228614615?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Better Living Health and Community Services

Wellness Breaks and Lunch n’ Learns

The Entering with Dr. Rami Shami

Date: Wednesday, June 16th from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

To register: https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYrdO6sqD4qH9D0ewmte0ZTEbs_xu1sRPpR

Cooking Demonstration with Alison Burke

Date: Wednesday, June 23rd from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.

To register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUtf-qpqDMvHNA921RKT9OK0M2zQmZ1OjBl>

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.