

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – March 19, 2021

As of March 19th, 2021, Canada has a total of 925, 285 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario has 325, 254 cases and Toronto has a total of 104, 306 cases.

Ontario lowering age threshold for COVID-19 vaccinations to 75, expanding pharmacy rollout

Starting Monday, March 22nd, anyone in Ontario aged 75 and older can sign up for the shot using [the province's online booking portal](#). Currently, only people aged 80 and older or 60 to 64 years old can book an appointment for the vaccine.

Premier Doug Ford made this announcement this morning. He gave credit to the frontline healthcare workers and volunteers for administering vaccines “even faster than we could ever imagine.” The premier added that more than 50% of Ontario residents aged 80 and over have already received at least one dose of a vaccine. Since the provincial booking portal was launched on March 15th, more than 239, 000 appointments have been scheduled for the first and second doses of a vaccine.

In addition to that, the premier announced that the availability of the AstraZeneca vaccine in pharmacies will be more widespread. This change will also go into effect on Monday March 22nd.

Before, the AstraZeneca vaccine was only being given to those between the ages of 60 and 64. This decision was originally made due to insufficient data on how efficient the shot would be in seniors. However, since then, three real-world studies have shown that the AstraZeneca vaccine is safe and effective in older populations.

After reviewing these studies, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) changed their recommendations and adjusted the age requirement for the AstraZeneca vaccine to be 60 and older. Starting Monday, people in this age range will be eligible to get this vaccine at Ontario pharmacies or through their primary care provider.

For the last week, 325 pharmacies in Toronto, Windsor-Essex and the Kingston area have been administering doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to residents born between January 1st, 1957 and December 31st, 1961. About 165, 000 doses of Ontario's AstraZeneca supply were provided to pharmacies while the remaining 29, 500 shots were given to primary care providers in Hamilton, Toronto, Guelph, Peterborough, Simcoe-Muskoka and Peel Region.

Earlier today, Ford announced that another 350 pharmacies will soon begin administering the vaccine over the next two weeks. This would bring the total number of pharmacies participating in the vaccine rollout to 700.

They will release more details about which pharmacies will be involved in the COVID-19 rollout in the near future. Click [here](#) to see the province's list of pharmacy locations where vaccines will be administered.

Source:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-lowering-age-threshold-for-covid-19-vaccinations-to-75-expanding-pharmacy-rollout-1.5353742>

Ontario reports spike in new COVID-19 cases, logs more than 1,700 infections

The province reported 1,745 new COVID-19 cases today. This number is significantly higher than yesterday's case count of 1,550 new cases, which was the highest number we had seen in five weeks.

Yesterday, Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. David Williams, who is Ontario's top doctor, confirmed that Ontario is in the third wave of the pandemic. He made this comment while describing the recent increase in reported cases.

Ontario's positivity rate is currently 3.3%, which is up from 3.1% the day before. In the past 24 hours, 56,134 COVID-19 tests were done.

Today's case count brings the total number of lab-confirmed cases in Ontario to 325,254, including deaths and recoveries. Health officials declared that 1,296 people with the virus have recovered, increasing Ontario's number of recovered patients to be 304,789. Ten deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in the past 24 hours.

Locally, Toronto reported 478 new cases (up from 404 yesterday), Peel Region reported 344 (up from 294 yesterday), and York Region reported 174 (down from 176 yesterday).

Within the past 24 hours, provincial health officials found 704 cases that have screened positive for a COVID-19 variant of concern. While 10,995 variant mutations have been discovered, most of them are still awaiting whole genome sequencing to confirm their lineage. Only 1,258 mutations have been officially categorized as specific variants of concern.

According to provincial data, there are at least 759 people in hospital due to COVID-19 infection. Of those patients, 309 are in intensive care and 176 are breathing with the help of a ventilator.

Within the past 24 hours, another 61,146 doses of COVID-19 vaccines were administered, up from yesterday's 58, 000 doses given. Today's number brings the total number of shots completed to 1, 420, 599. More than 294,749 people have now received both doses of the vaccine.

Source: <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-reports-spike-in-new-covid-19-cases-logs-more-than-1-700-infections-1.5353901>

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: 1-888-999-6488

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=ebdsoporgprofile>

A Three-Part Series – Empowering Caregivers to Cope

Session #3: Assist with Self Nurturing

Date: Monday, March 22nd, at 2:00pm

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/caregiver-webinar-series-assist-with-self-nurturing-see-for-yourself-registration-141470428861?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Long-Term Care Planning: What it is and why we should all care

Date: Monday, March 29th at 2:00pm

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/long-term-care-planning-what-is-it-and-why-we-should-all-care-registration-141473036661?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

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