

**Coronavirus: COVID-19**  
**Current Update – March 24, 2021**

As of March 24th, 2021, Canada has a total of 944, 674 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario has 333, 690 cases and Toronto has a total of 106, 953 cases.

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**Ontario reports fewer than 1, 600 new COVID-19 cases for second straight day**

The province reported fewer than 1, 600 new cases of COVID-19 for the second straight day, as well as a drop in the province's positivity rate.

1, 571 new COVID-19 cases were reported today, which is up from yesterday's case count of 1, 546 new infections. Today, Ontario's positivity rate is 3.7%, down from the positivity rates on Monday and Tuesday. Both of those days had positivity rates above 5%. The province's rolling seven-day average of new cases has risen to 1, 676 new cases per day, up from 1, 361, which was the seven-day average one week ago.

Of today's new cases, 459 are in Toronto, 309 are in Peel, and 143 are in York Region. Ottawa, Durham Region, and Hamilton each reported over 80 new cases.

The Ministry of Health says there are now 893 people in hospital due to COVID-19 infection. There are 333 COVID-19 patients in intensive care, and 210 of them are breathing with the assistance of a ventilator.

Ten deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in the past 24 hours. Since the start of the pandemic, the province has seen a total of 7, 263 deaths due to the virus. With 1, 531 more recoveries today, Ontario's total number of recovered patients is 311, 380.

Since the province started looking for COVID-19 Variants of Concern in Ontario, 14, 803 mutations have been discovered in lab-positive tests. In the last 24-hour period, officials found 909 new mutations. In total, only 1, 486 have gone through the process to be officially categorized. However, the estimate is that the province has at least 1, 389 cases of the B.1.1.7. variant (also known as the UK variant), 50 cases of the B.1.351 variant (also known as the South African variant) and 47 cases of the P.1. variant (also known as the Brazilian variant).

Throughout the province, within the past 24 hours, 51, 000 COVID-19 tests were completed and 72, 451 COVID-19 vaccine doses were given. 302, 664 people in Ontario have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and are now considered immunized against the disease.

On Tuesday night, provincial officials announced that more people will soon qualify to receive a vaccine as Ontario prepares to roll out Phase 2 of its vaccine plan, including: adults over 50 years old who are living in COVID-19 hotspot neighbourhoods, various frontline workers, and people with a wide range of health conditions.

Source:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-reports-fewer-than-1-600-new-covid-19-cases-for-second-straight-day-1.5360059>

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### **Third wave of COVID-19 infections will be worse than the first two, expert says**

On Monday, Ontario's top doctor Dr. David Williams declared that the province is entering its third wave.

Dr. Abdu Sharkawy, a doctor and infectious disease specialist in Ontario, says that this wave could be the worst yet. Earlier today, he said, "I think it's impossible to avoid a third wave that's likely going to be worse than the first two."

This time, densely-populated hotspots aren't the only ones who are seeing high case counts. Places that previously had low case counts are seeing more cases than ever before.

"Look what happened in Thunder Bay," he stated, referring to the northern Ontario city, which recently saw its highest daily case count at 64 cases on March 1st. Before that, the highest number of new cases per day was 60 on January 19th, and before then, their highest daily case count was 33.

There are many factors behind the third wave being more severe, but Dr. Sharkawy highlights the slow vaccine rollout and variants as its main drivers.

Also, the third wave is infecting younger people more than the first two waves. He notes, "We're seeing younger, healthier people develop this disease because they're unvaccinated and these variants are just likely to hit them."

Dr. Sharkawy claims that the number one way to reduce the spread of the third wave will be vaccines, and most likely, another lockdown. In his opinion, until the province gets enough vaccines, a lockdown will likely be necessary to keep the spread under control. "I can't foresee any other way of dealing with this," he said.

Source:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/third-wave-of-covid-19-infections-will-be-worse-than-the-first-two-expert-says-1.5360167>

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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: 1-888-999-6488

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**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**March of Dimes**

**Caregiver Webinars**

**Caregiver Connection Group – Caregiver conversation series – 10 weeks**

Date: starting Thursday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 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>

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

Date: Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup> 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>

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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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:sarah.nydp@gmail.com)