

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – March 26, 2021

As of March 26th, 2021, Canada has a total of 954, 687 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario has 338, 239 cases and Toronto has a total of 108, 288 cases.

Ontario reports more than 2, 100 new COVID-19 cases for second day, ICU patients surpass 400

For the second day in a row, Ontario reported more than 2,100 new cases of COVID-19. The province reported 2, 380 infections yesterday and 2, 169 cases today. Since yesterday, the province reported 682 new COVID-19 cases in Toronto, 397 in Peel Region, 254 in York Region, 129 in Ottawa, 123 in Durham Region and 122 in Hamilton.

Currently, Ontario's positivity rate is 3.8%. The province's rolling seven-day average of new cases has risen to 1, 855 new cases per day, up from 1, 480, which was the seven-day average one week ago.

The Ministry of Health says there are now at least 913 people in hospital due to COVID-19 infection. In Ontario, there are 369 COVID-19 patients in Intensive Care Units (ICUs), and 215 of them are breathing with the assistance of a ventilator. However, a report by Critical Care Services Ontario shows that the number of people being treated for COVID-19 the ICU has actually surpassed the 400 threshold, with 401 patients.

Last year, the provincial government said that when there are more than 150 people in Ontario ICUs who are being treated for COVID-19, caring for non-COVID-19-related diseases can be impacted. The government also said that when this number exceeds 300 patients, giving care to other diseases becomes nearly impossible.

Twelve deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in the past 24 hours. The total number of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario now stands at 338, 239, including deaths and recoveries.

In the last 24-hour period, officials found 1, 023 new mutations of the disease in Ontario. Since the province started looking for COVID-19 Variants of Concern, 16, 680 mutations have been discovered in lab-positive tests. In total, 1, 612 of these mutations have gone through the process to be officially categorized. In the last 24 hour-period, 36 B.1.1.7. variants (also known as the UK variant) have been identified, as well as nine B.1.351 variants (also known as the South African variant) and four P.1. variants (also known as the Brazilian variant).

Throughout the province, within the past 24 hours, 53, 400 COVID-19 tests were completed and 82, 900 COVID-19 vaccine doses were given. 306, 373 people in Ontario have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and are now considered immunized against the disease.

Source:

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/ontario-reports-more-than-2-100-new-covid-19-cases-for-second-day-icu-patients-surpass-400-1.5363451>

Uptick in variant spread means Canada facing 'strong resurgence' of COVID-19: modelling

Today, officials from the Public Health Agency of Canada presented new long-range projections, also known as modelling data, about how the virus will spread throughout the country.

The short-term forecast predicts that Canada will reach between 973, 080 to 1, 005, 020 cases by April 4th, and between 22, 875 to 23, 315 cumulative deaths. At the time when the modelling data was issued, there were more than 951, 500 COVID-19 cases and 22, 790 deaths in Canada.

The modelling data indicates that there will be a “strong resurgence” of COVID-19 cases across the country if public health measures remain at current levels and if the variants continue to spread. Variants of Concern of COVID-19 spread throughout communities more easily than the original COVID-19 disease. Also, if Canadians increase, or even maintain, the current number of people they come into contact with each day, COVID-19 cases are expected to increase to levels that we have not yet seen.

Today, Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam asked people and provinces to take more precautions and reassess their current approach. She said that eventually easing restrictions will only be possible if current spread is brought under control.

“In parts of Canada where variants of concern represent an increasingly high proportion of cases and are associated with a greater number of outbreaks, we need to maintain high degree of vigilance to keep COVID-19 infections rates down as vaccine programs scale up,” Dr. Tam said Friday, noting Canada is currently in a “tight race” against the variants.

“Current community-based public health measures will be insufficient to control rapid growth. It’s clear that we need to hold on together a bit stronger and longer until vaccines have us better protected,” she said, calling the latest figures “discouraging, after so many months of sacrifice.” “Daily case counts have increased over 30 per cent in the past two weeks... Every 100 cases in Canada, passes the virus to more than 100 others,” she said. Also, Dr. Tam advised Canadians that it is

not safe to gather in groups in-person for upcoming celebrations, such as Easter, Ramadan and Passover.

In Ontario, restrictions were recently eased slightly in certain regions, despite the provincial health data that show COVID-19 Variants of Concern are spreading considerably. In Dr. Tam's address earlier today, she suggested that frequently imposing and then lifting measures once the daily case count starts to go down is the wrong approach at this time.

“It may not be stay[ing] at home for every area... You've got to implement measures that work in your community where people are going to stick to as few interactions,” she said. “If there are detections that this activity is ramping up, then definitely don't relax.”

Throughout the country, the virus is currently the most prevalent among young adults aged 20 to 39, and the rate of incidents among older Canadians is declining. The number and size of outbreaks in Long-Term Care homes and other retirement residences continue to decline as well. This is a positive sign that vaccinations are effective at preventing and reducing the severity of new outbreaks in settings where many people are immunized.

However, Dr. Tam said that seeing more people vaccinated will not be enough to justify easing public health measures and other restrictions. She notes that many components need to be in place before life returns to some degree of normalcy, including: tracking how the virus is being spread; ensuring that public health has the capacity to process tests; tracing and quarantining new cases; having sufficient health care capacity to respond to surges of new cases; and implementing risk-reduction measures in high risk settings.

Following the modelling presentation, Health Minister Patty Hajdu pointed to the \$53 million that is being spent on a national “variants of concern strategy”, which includes funding for research into the variants, surveillance of their spread, and sequencing of the virus.

Source:

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/uptick-in-variant-spread-means-canada-facing-strong-resurgence-of-covid-19-modelling-1.5363497>.

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>

Long-Term Care Planning: What it is any 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