

Coronavirus: COVID-19
Current Update – March 4, 2021

As of March 4, 2021, Canada has a total of 875, 559 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Ontario itself has 304, 757 cases with Toronto having over 98, 192 cases.

Ontario reports 994 new COVID-19 cases and 10 more deaths

Ontario reported 994 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday and 10 additional deaths, as public health laboratories confirmed their largest count of additional cases involving variants of concern to date.

Across the GTA, Toronto reported 298 new cases, York Region reported 64, and Peel reported 171.

Ontario reported 958 new cases on Wednesday, 966 on Tuesday and 1,023 on Monday.

COVID-19

Ontario to extend COVID-19 vaccine intervals after change in federal guidance

The seven-day rolling average of daily cases now stands at 1,063, down from 1,084 on Wednesday.

Two of the ten new deaths reported involved residents of long-term care homes.

Provincial labs processed 65,643 test specimens in the past 24 hours, generating a positivity rate of at least 2.1 per cent.

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Another 42,723 specimens remain under investigation.

Using whole genomic sequencing, labs also confirmed another 92 new coronavirus cases involving variants of concern over the past day, bringing the total confirmed number of variant cases to 678, including 644 cases of the more highly contagious B.1.1.7 variant.

It's the largest increase in confirmed variant cases reported in Ontario in 2021, though thousands more samples that have screened positive during initial PCR testing still await full confirmation.

Ontario's Ministry of Health says the number of patients in hospital due to COVID-19 fell over the past 24 hours.

They say there were 649 patients in hospital receiving treatment on Thursday, down from 668 on Wednesday. Of those, 281 were in intensive care and 183 were breathing with the help of a ventilator.

But data from Critical Care Services Ontario obtained by CP24 on Thursday showed there were 326 people in intensive care on Thursday.

Elsewhere in the GTA, Halton Region reported 33 cases, Durham Region reported 23 new cases and Hamilton reported 40 new cases.

Source: [Ontario reports 994 new coronavirus cases; 10 more deaths | CP24.com](#)

Ontario to extend COVID-19 vaccine intervals after change in federal guidance

TORONTO - Ontario will extend the interval between doses of COVID-19 vaccines to up to four months after a national panel recommended doing so, paving the way for an acceleration of the province's immunization effort.

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A spokeswoman for Health Minister Christine Elliott said the province welcomed the updated guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization released late Wednesday afternoon.

The recommendation came two days after Ontario sought advice on dosing intervals in an effort to speed up its rollout, which has been criticized for being slow.

“This will allow Ontario to rapidly accelerate its vaccine rollout and get as many vaccines into arms as quickly as possible and, in doing so, provide more protection to more people,” Alexandra Hilkene said in a statement.

The province said it will soon share details on an updated vaccine plan that accounts for the new dosing recommendation as well as expected supply of the recently approved Oxford-AstraZeneca shots.

Earlier Wednesday, Ontario said it plans to administer the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine to residents aged 60 to 64.

Solicitor General Sylvia Jones said the targeted use of the vaccine will help cut illness and death across Ontario.

“We know that from age 60 and up there are, unfortunately, more hospitalizations when someone gets COVID,” she said. “By focusing in on those parts of our population that are more vulnerable, what we ended up actually doing is tamping down and curbing transmission.”

Jones said the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot will not be administered through mass immunization clinics but through a “different pathway,” although she did not elaborate on what that would be.

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Ontario said earlier this week that it was following the advice of the national vaccine panel that recommended against using the Oxford-AstraZeneca shot on people aged 65 and older due to limited data on its effectiveness in seniors.

Jones also said the government has signed an agreement with the province's pharmacists' association to have COVID-19 shots administered in pharmacies in the coming months.

Ontario has so far focused on vaccinating the highest-priority groups, including long-term care residents and certain health-care workers.

The province has said it aims to start vaccinating residents aged 80 and older starting the third week of March, though the timeline is subject to change.

Some public health units, however, have moved ahead with vaccinations for the general population, starting with people aged 80 and older.

Those units are taking bookings for immunizations through their own web or phone systems as a provincial portal remains under development.

Ontario has administered a total of 754,419 doses of a COVID-19 vaccine so far.

In York Region, residents aged 80 and older will be able to book an appointment for their first dose of the vaccine. This can be done on the York Region website, by clicking [here](#).

Source: <https://www.cp24.com/starting-monday-hamilton-will-begin-vaccinating-residents-85-and-york-region-will-allow-residents-80-to-book-appointment-1.5325868>

UPCOMING EVENTS:

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March of Dimes

Caregiver Webinars

A Three-Part Series – Empowering Caregivers to Cope

Date: Monday, March 8th, at 2:00pm

To register: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/caregiver-webinar-series-addressing-the-losses-caregivers-experience-registration-141419003045?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Caregiver Connection Group – Caregiver conversation series – 10 weeks

Date: starting Thursday, March 4th, at 2:00pm

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

Better Living Health and Community Services

Series of Wellness Breaks

Music and Movement with Cari Shim

Date: Thursday, March 4th, at 3:00pm

To register: <https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJcldumvrDoqG9UvtxdRoBMGMLjXFehn8sAT>

Chair Yoga with Trisha Lanns

Date: Tuesday, March 9th, at 10:45am

To register: <https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJMrcOytpz4iGt0gjM3Faea036plwv2x9NSJ>

Reconnecting the mind and body with Ashely Dipchan

Date: Thursday, March 11th at 3:00pm

To register: <https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJctfu2qpz8uH9FbqlvNGHv5N8ukz8fRsi15>

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:

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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