



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

COVID-19 Update

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Public Health and Emergency Services
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Highlights

- Cases in Waterloo Region have increased rapidly.
- Cases of variants of concern are continuing to increase and are now the predominant strains in Waterloo Region as in Ontario.
- It is imperative that we stay-at-home and only go out for essential purposes. Each of us as needs to do all we can to help slow the spread, help reduce community transmission, and help protect our health care system.

Overall trends

- Overall in Ontario, the situation is quite dire. Cases are surging, with the average incidence rate for Ontario now at approx. 182 cases per 100,000 per week.
 - This has now exceeded the highest peak of the second wave.
- In Waterloo Region our cases have increased rapidly. Our weekly incidence rate has now increased to approx. 100 cases per 100,000 per week.
- We are currently managing 625 active cases and 17 active outbreaks.
- Taking into account interim data, our 7-day average for per cent positivity is now at 4.9 per cent.
 - The 7-day average of percent positivity in Ontario is 8.1 per cent.
- Our latest reproductive rate sits at 1.2 which reflects how our case numbers have grown.

Variants of concern

- The three variants of concern have all now been detected in Waterloo Region.
- This week we received reports of both the B.1.351 variant (the variant first detected in South Africa) and the P.1 variant (the variant first detected in Brazil).
- This is not unexpected. Cases of variants of concern are continuing to increase and are now the predominant strains in Waterloo Region as in Ontario.

- Viruses constantly change through mutation, and new variants of a virus are expected to occur over time. Sometimes new variants emerge and disappear. Other times, new variants emerge and persist.
- These variants are considered variants of concern because they spread more easily and they can cause more severe illness.

Third wave

- As is the case across Ontario, we are now in the third wave in Waterloo Region.
- For Ontario overall, the third wave has already exceeded the peak of the second wave and continues to grow.
- Our local situation is concerning, as our rates have rapidly increased as well.
- The more we climb, the more likely we will continue to climb, rapidly.
- The stay-at-home order and lockdown requirements are critical to slowing this spread.

Closing remarks

- The public health measures – avoiding social gatherings, avoiding crowded places, limiting non-essential trips, physical distancing, wearing a face covering/mask, and getting a vaccine as soon as one becomes available to you – help to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- When you practice those measures, you reduce the number of exposures, the people and/or settings, where you may unknowingly spread COVID-19 before you know that you are infectious.
- Together, these measures are effective at slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- Even if you have been vaccinated, it is important to keep practicing these measures to protect others.
- Let's protect each other – stay home, stay safe, save lives.
- Thank-you.