



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health  
Public Health and Emergency Services  
April 23, 2021

### Highlights

- Our situation is still precarious. We are starting to see some stabilization.
- Close contact is one of the key drivers of transmission of COVID-19 and it is often spread to those whom we live with. We offer a Safe Voluntary Isolation Site to support people who are unable to isolate safely at home.
- Reducing our mobility and reducing our close contacts are essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19.

### Overall trends

- Our situation is still precarious. We are starting to see some stabilization.
- Our weekly incidence rate continues to hold at approximately 100 cases per 100,000 per week.
  - The weekly incidence rate for Ontario is now around 175 cases per 100,000 per week.
- We are currently managing 583 active cases and 28 active outbreaks.
- Taking into account interim data, our 7-day average for per cent positivity is now at 5.6 per cent. The provincial 7-day average per cent positivity is at 8.6 per cent.
- Our latest reproductive rate sits at 1.0, which means case rates are relatively stable, but this can change quickly.
- Cases of variants of concern are continuing to increase and continue to be the predominant strains in Waterloo Region.
- As expected, hospitalizations and ICU admissions are now increasing. Our hospitalization data (from the hospitals) is current as of April 20 and show that 62 individuals are in local hospitals, of which 24 are currently in ICU.
- We may be starting to see the impact of the stay-at-home order in our case rates, but we are experiencing more outbreaks, hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths, as these always follow a rise in case numbers.
- The impacts on our health care system and the number of deaths will likely continue to grow, as these are lagging indicators.

## Safe Voluntary Isolate Site

- Close contact is one of the key drivers of transmission of COVID-19 and it is often spread to those whom we live with.
- Earlier this year, the Public Health Agency of Canada funded Public Health to offer a Safe Voluntary Isolation Site Program to support people who are unable to isolate safely at home.
- The site is a safe place you can stay to help you rest and recover, and to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within your home and in the community.
- The isolation site is a hotel, not a medical setting, and there are no costs to individuals accessing the site.
- Your stay includes:
  - A private room
  - Three meals a day
  - WiFi and a computer to borrow during your stay
  - Transportation to and from the site can also be arranged
- A resource coordinator from our partner, Carizon Family and Community Services, can also help while you are at the site and any family members at home with on-on-one check-in calls and connect you to supports for emotional, spiritual, cultural or practical needs.
- If you need a safe space to isolate to protect yourself and others from COVID-19, I encourage you to contact the isolation site. If you care for a child or loved one, they can isolate with you. While anyone can access the program, our primary focus serving those disproportionately impacted by COVID
- While anyone can access the program, our primary focus is serving those who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and can't safely isolate.
- For information about who is eligible and how to contact the site visit [regionofwaterloo.ca/IsolationSite](https://regionofwaterloo.ca/IsolationSite)

## Closing remarks

- Reducing our mobility – staying home as much as possible, only going out for essential purposes – and reducing our close contacts are critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19.
- If you do develop any symptoms, have been exposed to a confirmed case, or have screened positive on a rapid test, please seek testing at one of our local assessment centres.
- Testing and identifying positive cases is an essential strategy to our ability to control and limit the spread of COVID-19.
- This week I made an appointment with my local pharmacy to get the AstraZeneca vaccine.
- If you're 40 or older, you are eligible for the AstraZeneca vaccine available at participating pharmacies or primary care practices.
- I strongly encourage you to get the first vaccine that becomes available to you.
- I am grateful for all your efforts and I'm encouraged to see so many in our community working together to help slow the spread in our community.
- Thank you.