



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
December 11, 2020

Highlights

- Cases, outbreaks and hospitalizations remain high in Waterloo Region but are not rapidly accelerating at this time.
- Instructions for workplaces and businesses under the Reopening Ontario Act will come into effect on Monday, December 14 at 12:01 a.m.
- For the holidays, only celebrate in-person with the people you live with. Celebrate virtually with everyone else. If you live alone, you may join one other household.

Overall trends

- In the past week, our indicators have improved compared to last week, when our indicators were at their highest levels, and are similar to where we were two weeks ago on Nov. 27, 2020.
- We still have high rates and the situation overall continues to be serious and concerning.
 - Our incidence rate is now: 70 cases per 100,000 per week (down from 90 / 100,000 / week).
 - We are currently 10th in the Province, down from 4th, as other health units' rates have increased over the past week.
 - This will fluctuate but shows that there are increasing rates in multiple areas in the Province.
 - Our current per cent positivity (taking into account interim data) is 3.3 per cent, down from 4.1 per cent last week
 - Our reproductive rate has also decreased, and has more recently fluctuated between 0.9-1.1.
- This past week, however, we have seen an increase in hospitalizations and outbreaks in long-term care and retirement facilities.
- Outbreaks in care homes, hospitalizations, and sadly, deaths, are lagging indicators, which means we start to see increases in these numbers in the following weeks after we have a rapid acceleration of cases.

- Our status is still firmly in the Red Zone.

Instructions to workplaces and businesses

- Yesterday I issued instructions to workplaces and businesses under the Reopening Ontario Act, to reinforce measures that will limit the spread of COVID-19 in these settings.
- These instructions go into effect on **Monday, December 14 at 12:01 a.m.**
- I recognize that this is a challenging time for organizations and they have had to adapt quickly to implement new requirements and measures.
- I want to acknowledge and thank businesses for their efforts.
- I am issuing these instructions because we have seen as part of the second wave a significant number of outbreaks in these settings, and common areas of concern have been identified through our outbreak investigations and the education and enforcement blitz led by the Ministry of Labour that recently took place in our region.
- Among other requirements, I am instructing these settings to:
 - Conduct active screening of employees.
 - Prepare and implement a COVID-19 safety plan and designate a management person responsible for implementation and monitoring compliance to the plan.
 - Ensure physical distancing throughout the workplace, including in employee-only areas.
 - Optimize indoor air ventilation.
- The full details of the instructions are available at regionofwaterloo.ca/PH

Holiday reminders

- Our holidays and traditions will not be the same this year but they can be just as meaningful.
- Some ideas for this holiday season:
 - Plan virtual gatherings with family, friends, and coworkers
 - With your immediate household:
 - Build a snowman together
 - Watch your favourite holiday or winter movie together
 - Decorate indoors and out – go for a walk or drive together to look at the lights in your neighbourhood
 - Bake your favourite holiday treats together or try a new recipe
 - Send cards and gifts in the mail
 - Donate to your favourite charity or toy drive
- Celebrate in-person only with the people you live with. If you live alone, you may join one other household. Celebrate virtually with everyone else.

Closing remarks

- Now is not the time to stop practicing public health measures. It is important that we stay the course.
- We must continue to:
 - Avoid social gatherings with those outside our immediate household
 - Limit non-essential trips outside our home
 - Practice physical distancing
 - Wear a face covering
 - Wash our hands frequently
 - Avoid enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces and crowded places
- These measures work to protect yourself and your loved ones.
- Our situation is serious.
- And very fragile.
 - Due to our high number of new cases per day, we are at increased risk of growth resuming at an accelerated rate
- For the Red measures to have the best chance of slowing our spread, we have to pull together as a community and continue to dramatically reduce our social interactions.
 - We cannot let up.
- Thank you.