



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

- The current wave of COVID-19, which has resulted from the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, peaked in the middle of January and is slowly decreasing.
- Waste water monitoring is showing signs of Omicron plateauing at high levels.
- Changes to the Region's COVID-19 and vaccine distribution dashboards are being made today and next Friday to describe the current situation in Waterloo Region in a more meaningful way.
- Our health care system is still under great pressure due to the number of patients hospitalized and in the ICU with COVID-19, and the need to ramp up delayed surgeries and procedures as soon as possible.
- I strongly encourage residents to follow public health precautions and get a third dose of the vaccine to reduce the risk of serious outcomes for them and their loved ones.

Overall trends

- We continue to rely on a number of indicators to monitor local trends:
 1. Wastewater signals:
 - The wastewater data up to February 5, 2022 indicates that the decline in the SARS-CoV-2 wastewater signal in the last few weeks has slowed or plateaued at all sites.
 - The wastewater signal still remains high relative to previous waves and continues to be dominated by the Omicron variant; BA.1 is the primary sub-lineage detected, but there has also been moderate presence of the BA.2 sub-lineage in the Waterloo Region wastewater.
 2. Per cent positivity:
 - The 7-day moving average of per cent positivity is now down to 9.8%.

3. Outbreaks:

- The number of outbreaks in high-risk settings is continuing to slowly decline: There were 41 active outbreaks as of yesterday, including 20 in long-term care and retirement homes, 10 in congregate settings, and 11 hospital outbreaks.
- Local hospitals continue to care for a large number of people with COVID-19.
 - Hospitalizations peaked in mid-January (148) and have slowly declined to 86 on February 9 (and 19 total in the ICU).
- Our health care system continues to be under great pressure due to the number of patients hospitalized and in the ICU with COVID-19, and the need to ramp up delayed surgeries and procedures as soon as possible.
- One small update to the dashboard changes announced yesterday: For the month of February, we will update the vaccine dashboard twice a week (on Mondays and Thursdays) before moving to once a week starting in March.

Cautiously resume activities

- A cautious approach to resuming activities by continuing to use the tools that work to blunt COVID-19 will serve us well.
- By getting vaccinated and boosted, by staying at home when we're sick, by wearing a mask, and by avoiding crowded places and enclosed spaces, we're helping not only ourselves and others avoid becoming seriously ill, we're also helping to get delayed surgeries and procedures started again, and helping to keep schools and businesses open.
- All our efforts are making a difference.

Closing remarks

- We're heading in the right direction but we're not out of the woods yet.
- Increasing vaccination coverage and following public health precautions is what is enabling Waterloo Region and the province to move forward.
- In the coming weeks, please resume your activities gradually and cautiously.
- Thank you.