



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  
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### Highlights

- Based on the latest data, we believe that Delta is already the dominant strain in Waterloo Region.
- Cases are occurring throughout the region, due to the usual risk factors, but spreading even faster due to Delta, and among those who are mostly unimmunized.
- This means that we need to be extremely diligent with our public health precautions, while we continue to accelerate first and second doses in Waterloo Region.
- We can build a “wall of protection” in our community to stop the spread, by getting vaccinated and keeping each other safe by practicing public health precautions.
- Do not turn down Moderna to wait for Pfizer. Get the first mRNA vaccine that's available to you. Moderna and Pfizer are the same type of vaccine and they are both highly effective and equally effective. They can also be safely mixed.

### Current Situation

- Our weekly incidence rate has continued to increase, due to the usual risk factors, fuelled by the Delta variant.
- In addition to increasing hospitalizations, we are also starting to experience an increased number of outbreaks. This always occurs after a rise in the number of cases.
- Based on the latest data, we believe that Delta is already the dominant strain in Waterloo Region.
- Using proxy indicators for Delta, we estimate that Delta is growing rapidly in our region and that, most recently, between June 6th to June 12<sup>th</sup>, 65% of our cases were most likely Delta.
- Residents should therefore assume that Delta is the dominant strain circulating in Waterloo Region.

- While we do have a significant shelter system outbreak, most of our cases do not come from that outbreak. Cases are occurring throughout the region, due to the usual risk factors, but spreading even faster due to Delta, and among those who are mostly unimmunized. There is wide circulation of Delta in Waterloo Region.
- Close contact remains the most common driver of transmission.
- This includes close contact in households and, in part, social gatherings where people from multiple households are having close contact interactions.

## **Building Our Wall of Protection**

- If we didn't have the immunization rates we have already in Waterloo Region, the situation would have been much worse.
- We have seen instances of the virus not being able to further spread after it encounters people who have been vaccinated.
- We have already built a good portion of this "wall of protection", through the immunization rates we've achieved to date. We need to keep building our wall.
- With Delta, our wall of protection needs to be higher and stronger than ever before. We need to keep our pushing our immunization rates as high as they will go.

## **Moderna and Pfizer**

- Waterloo Region, like the rest of Ontario, will be receiving much more supply of Moderna in the coming weeks.
- Do not turn down Moderna to wait for Pfizer. Get the first mRNA vaccine that's available to you.
- Moderna and Pfizer are the same type of vaccine - mRNA vaccines - and they are both highly effective and equally effective.
- They can also be safely mixed. That is, you may safely receive one mRNA vaccine (e.g. Pfizer) for your first dose and a different mRNA vaccine (e.g. Moderna) for your second dose.
- Do not turn down Moderna to wait for Pfizer, to get your first dose or to complete your series. Pfizer has more brand recognition but Moderna is just as good. They are like 'twins'.

## **Closing remarks**

- Now is not the time to let our guard down or loosen adherence to public health measures.
- Waterloo Region has come together before to push back COVID-19. We can do it again.
- Let's continue building our vaccine "wall of protection". And continue protecting one another with our public health practices while we do so.
- Waterloo Region is a caring and resilient community, please continue to be kind to one another and support each other.

- We can do this, and we will get through this together.
- Thank you.