



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
June 25, 2021

Highlights

- Yesterday's news that we are delaying our move to Step 2 is not the news anybody wanted to hear, but let me be clear: this is a strategic decision to give us all the summer we deserve.
- We have the support of Doctors Moore and Williams in this decision.
- We are seeing the Delta variant spreading in all settings – in workplaces, in our community through social gatherings, and in congregate living settings.
- Giving us a couple of weeks for the vaccines to work can allow us to re-open and stay open.
- We do not want to take a step back at this point.
- We have been asking for more vaccine every week since the beginning of the roll-out. I'm pleased that the province is now sending teams and 40,000 additional doses. We will get these out quickly to everyone.
- But this isn't just about vaccine: with our current Delta situation, and our hospitals filling up with COVID patients and starting to send some out of region, we cannot move to Step 2 just yet.
- We know this is incredibly difficult – now more than ever we need to support local. Our local businesses need us. Waiting a couple of weeks will help them re-open and stay open.
- Again, we do not want to take a step back. We have come so far.
- Vaccination remains our best defense against COVID-19 and the Delta variant. The vaccines are highly effective at reducing the risk for severe outcomes.

Case situation and vaccination status

- Over 76% of confirmed cases since May 1, 2021 in Waterloo Region were among individuals who were unvaccinated
 - 21.9% were partially vaccinated or vaccinated but not yet fully protected by their vaccination
 - 1.6% were fully vaccinated
- The majority of hospitalized cases since May 1, 2021 in Waterloo Region were among individuals who were unvaccinated (77.8%).

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- 20.6% were partially vaccinated or vaccinated but not yet fully protected by the vaccine
 - 1.6% were fully vaccinated.
- 87.5% of reported deaths since May 1 were in individuals who were not yet vaccinated or were not yet protected from their vaccination.
- Delta is spreading rapidly mostly among the younger population: those 20-29, 30-39 and under 18 years of age. Vaccination remains our best defense against COVID-19 and the Delta variant.
- The vaccines are highly effective at reducing the risk for severe outcomes.

Delaying Step 2 and Closing Remarks

- Moving to Step 2 requires achieving vaccine milestones, reduced hospitalization and stabilization of case rates.
- With the Delta variant we know that the first dose improves protection against infection, but the strongest protection is for those who are fully immunized.
- Delaying Step 2 for approximately a couple of weeks, while we continue to accelerate first and second doses, will allow us to further protect our community and will help us keep moving forward.
- While Waterloo Region remains under Step 1, all Waterloo Region residents are advised to:
 - Limit all non-essential travel to communities outside of Waterloo Region
 - Limit all close contact to only your household members or one of other household, exclusively, if you live alone
 - Get vaccinated as soon as you can and encourage others to do so
 - Continue to practice public health measures including physical distancing, wearing a face covering and staying at home if you have any symptoms.
- In closing, I understand it was very difficult news for many in our community to hear.
- But it is worth repeating: this is a strategic decision to give us all the summer we deserve.