



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## COVID-19 Update

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Public Health and Emergency Services  
March 4, 2022

### Highlights

- It is because of the many sacrifices that residents have made throughout the pandemic that we've been able to gradually lift restrictions.
- Vaccination and public health measures have been very effective at reducing the impact of the pandemic, including the recent Omicron wave.
- We are seeing slow declines or plateauing in our overall trends, and we won't know the impacts of the March 1 lifting of measures until mid-March.
- I continue to recommend vaccination and a cautious approach to resuming activities including:
  - Getting a booster dose; and
  - Wearing a mask in indoor settings and avoiding crowded places and enclosed spaces

### Overall trends

We are seeing slow declines or plateauing in our overall trends.

1. Wastewater signals:
  - The wastewater data up to February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022 indicates that the decline in the SARS-CO-V-2 wastewater signal has slowed or plateaued at all sites
2. Per cent positivity:
  - Our latest dashboard update later today will show that the 7-day moving average of per cent positivity continues to slowly decrease and is now at 8.3%
3. Outbreaks and hospital capacity:
  - The number of outbreaks in high-risk settings continues to decline. There were 8 active outbreaks as of yesterday, including 2 in long-term

care and retirement homes, 3 in congregate settings, and 3 hospital outbreaks

- Hospitalizations are stable. As of our latest update yesterday, there were 25 total hospitalizations and 11 in the ICU
- Between January 14 – February 13,\* individuals in Ontario who were unvaccinated were 5-24 times more likely to die after being infected with COVID-19 than fully vaccinated individuals with a booster dose

*\*Most recent data available from PHO*

## Closing remarks

- Although we're still trending in the right direction, we still need to be cautious at this time.
  - COVID-19 continues to circulate at relatively high levels, and we won't know the impact of the March 1 changes to public health measures until mid-March
- Vaccination including a booster remains our best defense against current and future variants.
- Masking indoors will also continue to provide us with an added layer of protection.
- Overall, we are in a stronger position than we were 2 years ago.
  - 85% of the eligible population 5 years of age and older has received 2 doses of vaccine, and 54% of the eligible population 12 years of age and older has received 3 doses
  - Our efforts to fight COVID-19 together have saved many lives and reduced social disruption
- Thank you for your continued efforts and care for our community.