



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
May 7, 2021

Highlights

- We are starting to see trends begin to move in the right direction but rates are still high in Waterloo Region.
- A large number of cases that were previously classified as “Screened positive for a VOC – lineage not determined” have now been classified as the B.1.1.7 variant.
- The best vaccine is the first vaccine you are offered.
- Thank you for continuing to do all that you can to support our community.

Overall trends

- We are starting to see trends begin to move in the right direction but rates are still high in Waterloo Region.
- As of May 6, our weekly incidence rate is now at approximately 70 cases per 100,000 per week.
 - The weekly incidence rate for Ontario is now around 140 cases per 100,000 per week.
- We are currently managing 502 active cases and 14 active outbreaks.
- Taking into account interim data, our 7-day average for per cent positivity is now at 5.6 per cent. Ontario’s average is at 7.9 per cent.
- We continue to have a significant number of COVID-19 cases in our local hospitals, both acute cases and those who are no longer infectious but remain in serious condition, requiring ongoing hospitalization or ICU care.
- Our situation can change quickly if we don’t keep up with public health measures.
- We need to keep up with these measures to drive our rates down. We need to drive them lower and lower.
 - We do not want to emerge from lockdown at high levels. This will keep us continually at risk and under restrictions for longer.

Dashboard update

- Yesterday, we implemented an update on our dashboard to align with updated provincial reporting of COVID-19 variants.
- What was previously classified as a case that has screened positive for a variant, will now be reported as a “mutation detected”.
 - This means that a mutation associated with a variant has been detected.
- On the epi-curve, the reporting categories have changed to “Mutation/variant detected” and “Mutation/variant not reported”.
- One other change reported yesterday is that a large number of cases that were previously classified as “Screened positive for a VOC – lineage not determined” have now been classified as the B.1.1.7 variant.
 - This is due to updates in laboratory testing.
 - We had a high number of cases where the lineage had not yet been determined and this change is a change in classification, rather than an actual increase in the number of B.1.1.7 cases.

Vaccine safety

- All COVID-19 vaccines available in Ontario have been determined to be safe and effective by Health Canada.
- For the vast majority of the population, the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccines outweighs the risks of getting COVID-19.
- In Waterloo Region, our rates remain high. We’ve been in the Red Zone or Shutdown since November 2020.
- The best vaccine is the first vaccine you are offered.

Closing remarks

- Your actions can and do make a difference in our community.
- When you follow public health measures by reducing your mobility and limiting your close contacts, you protect against transmission and infection.
- I appreciate that these measures are not easy. It has been a very difficult year.
- I am grateful for the care and support Waterloo Region residents continue to show each other.
- Thank you for continuing to do all that you can to support our community.