



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## COVID-19 Update

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### Essential activities

- The spread of COVID-19 has escalated rapidly in Waterloo Region.
- We are speeding fully into the Red zone. If we do not make major changes now, we will continue towards the Lockdown zone.
- **Starting today, we need to dramatically reduce our social interactions:**
  1. **We need to stay home and only go out for essential purposes** like going to work, school, getting groceries, keeping a medical appointment or exercising outdoors.
  2. **We need to limit our social interactions to only those within our households**, which can include one or two essential caregivers or essential supports for someone who is living alone.
- This means, **we need to avoid social interactions with friends, with co-workers when not at work, and with extended family outside of our households.**
- I am asking all Waterloo Region residents to help our community through the personal actions that we can each take.
- If we choose to act now, before it gets worse, we can mitigate the period of time we will need to be under significant restrictions.
- I do not want to raise false hopes though.
- Because of choices we have already made, which are being reflected in our rates today, we will undergo a difficult period of restrictions.
- Our trajectory is already in motion like that of a speeding train towards the Red zone and beyond.
- But we can all make a choice, starting today, to slow that train, stop it, and make it start going in the opposite direction... towards Green.

## Current status of COVID-19

- Last Friday, Minister of Health Christine Elliott said,
  - "Over the last week we have seen an alarming shift in the trends of key public health indicators in regions across the province"
  - We have definitely seen this in Waterloo Region.
- Our case rates have more than tripled within the last two weeks.
- Our outbreaks have rapidly expanded in number, size and complexity.
- Our hospitalizations have tripled in the last few days.
- An increase in deaths will start to follow.
- Rising case rates are **only the tip of the iceberg**. What we see first.
- When a large number of cases appear in multiple settings, this leads to multiple clusters and outbreaks in various settings, which leads to broader and faster community spread.
- Accelerating case rates give rise to exponential spread in our community.
  
- Due to what we've seen in the last week, **Waterloo Region residents should consider COVID-19 to be widely circulating in the community right now.**
  - If you have symptoms, do not go to work, do not go to school.
  - Self-isolate and make an appointment to be tested.
  - Testing appointment times are easy to get now, there is capacity, and testing turnaround times are good.
- Even before we are officially moved to Red, I am asking all Waterloo Region residents to help our community through the personal actions that we can each take.

## Closing remarks

- Our personal actions are the biggest determinant of COVID-19 spread, and our choices of how we interact socially with others will determine if we control COVID-19, or if it controls us.
- Throughout this pandemic, Waterloo Region residents have shown they are willing to step up and do what it takes to beat COVID and help protect one other.
- We can make this choice ourselves before we have no other choice and much damage will be done to businesses, livelihoods and lives.
- Let's limit our trips outside to essential purposes and cease all social gatherings.
- We need to do this now, and we can do this together.
- Thank you.

