



COVID-19 Update

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Overall trends

- At this time, our growth has not accelerated at the same pace as some other areas in Ontario.
- Similar to other mid-size regions in Ontario however, we remain in a precarious state in Waterloo Region.
- As of this morning's dashboard update, there are 127 active cases.
 - This number fluctuates with the pace of growth of new cases.
- A total of 152,897 tests have been performed in Waterloo Region.
- There are currently nine active outbreaks:
 - We have declared a new outbreak at Wilfred Laurier University in residence (Conrad Hall) as well as off-campus.
 - More information about this outbreak below.
 - One in a congregate care setting
 - Three in long term care homes
 - Two in licensed child care settings
 - Two in a school setting

Some minor improvements to daily dashboard:

- We have made some changes to our public dashboard under the 'Characteristics' tab: we converted our existing bar charts for ever hospitalized, health care workers and gender to epi-curves which show the changes of these characteristics over the course of the pandemic.
 - The same information about percentages can still be seen when you hover over the graphs.
- Most cases among healthcare workers occurred during earlier stages in the pandemic.

- Overall there have been more cases who are females than males, however in recent months, the proportion of cases by gender has been relatively balanced.

Wilfrid Laurier University Outbreak

- Public Health has declared an outbreak at the University both in residence and off campus.
- We have a total of 7 cases to date which are linked.
 - 4 of whom (3 confirmed + 1 probable) reside at the Conrad Hall Residence and 3 (confirmed cases) who reside off campus.
 - They are considered linked because all 7 likely acquired their infection participating in one of multiple 'study groups' held off campus.
- All cases are being followed by Public Health and high risk contacts are being advised that they need to self-isolate and get tested.
- Due to 4 cases and other high risk contacts identified on two floors of the Conrad Hall Residence, these 2 floors have been declared in outbreak and students living on these floors are being asked to self-isolate and will be tested.
 - We are not publicly identifying the 2 floors due to a risk of identification of the individual cases, but all students who are impacted are being informed by the University. Public Health will also be following up with them individually.
- Public Health is recommending that everyone only have close contact with those they live with, for example, in their dorm or room, and physically distance and wear a face covering with everyone else.
- The safest thing to do when studying together is to study together virtually.
- If you choose to gather in person:
 - Maintain strict physical distancing and the wearing of face covering;
 - Keep the gathering as small as possible;
 - Use outdoor spaces as much as possible.

Advice for Halloween: Stick to low-risk activities

- Given that Ontario and areas including Waterloo Region have entered its second wave of COVID-19 infections, Region of Waterloo Public Health supports the recommendation of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health that people:
 - Limit close (unprotected) contact to those within our immediate household.
- For events such as Halloween, it is recommended that residents stick to low-risk activities.
- Ideas for celebrating Halloween safely with members of your immediate household include:
 - Pumpkin decorating;
 - Virtual costume party;
 - Halloween movie night;

- Sharing spooky stories;
- Outdoor trick-or-treat scavenger hunt in the back-yard.
- The general principles are as follows:
 - Limit close contact to people living in your own household.
 - Virtual gatherings are the safest way to visit with people outside your household.
- If you choose to hold or participate in an in-person gathering with people outside your household, you need to take the following precautions:
 - Stay home if you have symptoms, even if they are mild or you recently had a negative COVID-19 test.
 - Physically distance and wear a face covering with anyone outside of your immediate household
 - Regardless of the legal limits of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors, you should:
 - Keep your gathering as small as possible;
 - Use outdoor spaces whenever possible.
 - Gathering outdoors is safer than indoors;
 - The fewer the people, the lower the risk.
- If you choose to go out trick or treating:
 - Only go out with members of your immediate household;
 - Physically distance and wear a face covering with anyone outside of your immediate household.
 - Both trick-or-treaters and people handing out candy should wear a face covering. Not a costume mask.
 - A costume mask is not a substitute for a face covering and should not be worn over a face covering as it may make it difficult to breathe.
 - Do not leave treats in a bucket or bowl for children to grab.
 - Use tongs, or other similar tools, to hand out treats
 - Do not congregate or linger at doorsteps. Line up two metres apart if waiting.

Closing remarks

- **The recommended measures of physical distancing, wearing a mask, washing your hands and limiting close interactions outside of your immediate household are going to be important going forward.**
- We know that COVID-19 spreads easily when we have close, unprotected contact with others.
- This means it spreads easily between loved ones or friends.

- I appreciate that many of you have remained committed to following the recommended public health practices.
- Thank you, especially, to everyone who followed guidelines over Thanksgiving weekend.
- Together, we can reduce the spread of COVID, and keep our school and businesses open, and medical procedures and surgeries going.
- Thank you.