COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
Public Health and Emergency Services
October 22, 2021

Highlights

- For the first time in 2021, our indicators are now comparable to where they were last October.
- We are seeing the impact of high vaccination rates combined with public health measures in bringing COVID-19 under control.
- Be sure to get your flu shot this year. You are able to get the flu shot even if you have recently gotten your COVID-19 vaccine.

Overall trends

- At this time, we continue to see stability in our local trends.
- For the first time in 2021, our indicators are now comparable to where they were last October.
- As of yesterday’s update, our weekly case rate is now at approximately 15 cases per 100,000 per week
- We are currently managing 98 active cases and 3 outbreaks.
- Our community has made incredible strides and we have been able to limit and control the spread of COVID-19 in our community through high vaccination rates and public health measures.
- But there will still be some degree of uncertainty as we move forward, especially as we start spending more time indoors, especially if we gather with others.
- Be sure to continue to practice public health precautions, avoid large indoor gatherings, ensure well-ventilated indoor spaces, and stay home if you have any symptoms to protect against the spread of COVID-19.

Getting your flu shot

- The flu season typically runs from late fall to early spring and the flu shot offers the best protection for yourself and others against serious illness or complications related to influenza.
- The flu shot is safe and recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.
• Flu vaccinations are already available for priority populations such as those who are at higher risk of complications and will be broadly available to the public in November so don’t delay getting your shot.
• This year the flu shot will be available in pharmacies for anyone two years of age and older.
• The flu shot is also available through family doctors or walk-in clinics.
• Public Health will also be holding select clinics for families with children 6 months up to 2 years of age who are not eligible to get the vaccine at a pharmacy.
• You are able to get the flu shot even if you have recently gotten your COVID-19 vaccine.
  o COVID-19 vaccine can be given at the same time, or at any time before or after, non-COVID-19 vaccines such as the flu vaccine.

Closing remarks
• We are seeing the impact of high vaccination rates combined with public health measures.
• The Delta variant continues to be the predominant strain of COVID-19 in our community.
• It is highly transmissible, causes more severe illness, and continues to be a risk.
• Delta is particularly adept at finding any particular gap in our defenses, which is why we need to continue to build our vaccine wall of protection.
• We anticipate that the Province will have an update later today about the next phase of reopening for Ontario.
• We need to continue with a cautious approach towards the lifting of public health measures.
• Our residents can take actions to reduce their risk through maintaining the core public health practices of masking, distancing, keeping gatherings small, ensuring good ventilation, and staying away from others if we have any symptoms.
• Our actions have had a powerful effect against Delta. Thank-you again to our residents for everything you are doing to protect one another.
• Thank you.