COVID-19 Update

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Highlights

• With Ontario in the fourth wave, we have seen a slowly increasing trend in the number of daily cases in Waterloo Region, especially among those who have not yet been vaccinated.
• As contacts between people are expected to increase even more starting this month, the Delta variant risks spreading rapidly.
• We need to continue increasing our vaccination rates as well as continue with our basic public health precautions.
• Although those who are unvaccinated are at greatest risk, those who are fully vaccinated still need to be cautious. They can still become infected with COVID-19. They are advised to continue practicing public health precautions.
• Everyone is advised to remember the three Cs – avoid closed spaces, crowded places and (unprotected) close contact.

Overall trends

• Over the last 3 weeks, we have seen a slowly increasing trend in our number of daily cases, especially among those who have not yet been vaccinated. As of yesterday’s update, we currently sit at approximately 27 cases per 100,000 per week.
• Hospitalizations and outbreaks remain stable.

Vaccination status trends

• From December 22\textsuperscript{nd}, 2020 to September 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2021, COVID-19 vaccines are estimated to have prevented 3,935 cases, 548 hospitalizations, and 82 deaths among individuals aged 18 and older in our region.
• As of September 8\textsuperscript{th}, the 7-day average rate of COVID-19 (per 100,000 person-days) in Waterloo Region is more than 9 times higher in unvaccinated individuals.
compared to fully vaccinated individuals (5.02 per 100,000 in unvaccinated versus 0.54 per 100,000 in fully vaccinated).

- More than 66,000 residents in Waterloo Region who are eligible for the vaccine have not yet received a first dose. These individuals are at greatest risk of serious outcomes if they become infected, such as needing to be hospitalized, requiring ICU care or passing away.
- In Ontario, among those in hospital for a COVID-19 infection, those who are unvaccinated are 24 times more likely to be hospitalized than those who are fully vaccinated; and among those in intensive care, those who are unvaccinated are 43 times more likely to be in ICU compared to those who have been fully vaccinated.

Public health measures remain important

- This week students returned to school after summer vacation. I would like to wish them all a healthy and happy school year.
- In the coming months, all of us will have an important role to help protect each other from COVID-19.
- **As contacts between people are expected to increase starting this month, the Delta variant risks spreading rapidly.**
- One of the trends we are noticing in our case and contact management is fully vaccinated individuals no longer taking public health precautions and getting infected through close, unprotected contact with others, especially in large gatherings.
- **It is important that everyone understand that vaccination, while it is the most powerful layer of protection we can add in our fight against COVID-19, cannot be the only tool we rely on to get us through the 4th wave.**
- We also need to continue with the basic public health precautions:
  - Practice physical distancing and avoid crowded places.
  - Wear a face covering indoors, and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible.
  - Minimize the size of your gatherings. We're seeing more large gatherings, with many more contacts.
  - When you are socializing with others, choose the outdoor environment if possible or ensure the indoor environment is well-ventilated.
  - Get tested and self-isolate if you develop symptoms or if it's been recommended you do. Testing and self-isolation remain critical tools to protect ourselves and those around us.
- Remember the three Cs – avoid closed spaces, crowded places and (unprotected) close contact.
Closing remarks

• If you’re already fully vaccinated, thank you.
• If you recently made the decision to get a first dose of the vaccine, thank you.
• Thank-you for helping protect one another.
• Please stay safe.