COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
Public Health and Emergency Services
September 24, 2021

Highlights

- At this time, we continue to see relative stability in our local trends.
- We are grateful for the community partners who are working together this weekend to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the negative impacts of binge drinking, substance misuse, and unsanctioned gatherings.
- Ontario’s proof of vaccination program is an important measure to help limit and control the spread in higher-risk indoor settings while supporting our local businesses.

Overall trends

- At this time, we continue to see relative stability in our local trends.
- This is consistent with what many communities in Ontario are currently seeing.
- However, the Delta variant continues to circulate in our community and represents the vast majority of cases.
- We know that the Delta variant is more transmissible and causes more severe illness, and case rates could rise as people start to have more activity indoors.

Homecoming

- This weekend, students and alumni from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College will celebrate Homecoming.
- Because of the Delta variant and how easily it spreads when public health measures are not practiced, if you wish to celebrate in-person with others, reduce your risk by celebrating outdoors in small groups with people you trust.
- Post-secondary students are an important and valued part of our community in Waterloo Region and I recognize that many students are already taking the appropriate steps to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community.
- By celebrating virtually or limiting your contacts you are protecting yourself, your community, and emergency responders.
• We are also grateful for the community partners who are working together this weekend to reduce the spread of COVID-19, and reduce the negative impacts of binge drinking, substance misuse, and unsanctioned gatherings.

Proof of vaccination

• Ontario’s proof of vaccination program came into effect on Wednesday for select indoor, non-essential settings.
• The Delta variant is highly transmissible and will spread easily when given the opportunity.
• The risk of transmission increases when you are indoors (especially in spaces with poor ventilation) or in crowded places.
• Residents will need to have their proof of vaccination on hand, as well as identification, to attend indoor restaurants, nightclubs, gyms, sporting events, movie theatres and other higher-risk indoor public settings.
• The proof of vaccination program is an important measure to help limit and control the spread in higher-risk indoor settings while supporting our local businesses.
• As the weather gets colder and the opportunity for outdoor options becomes more limited, this program will also help customers feel comfortable in these indoor settings.

Closing remarks

• I want to thank again our eligible residents who have stepped up to get vaccinated. By each of you taking this important step in such high numbers, you have given a tremendous gift to your community.
• And if you’ve not yet been vaccinated, it is not too late to do so.
• You can get your vaccine at a Regional vaccine clinic, mobile bus, pop-up clinic, pharmacy or through participating primary care providers.
• The higher we drive our vaccination rates, while continuing to practice public health precautions, the more effective we’ll be at pushing back against Delta, protecting those who cannot yet be immunized and those who are medically frail, preserving our health care system, and keeping our schools and businesses open.
• Thank you.