



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

COVID-19 Update

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Public Health and Emergency Services

September 29, 2020

Overall Trends

- As of this morning's dashboard update, there are 156 active cases.
- A total of 131,533 tests have been performed in Waterloo Region with positive results for 1.3 per cent of all tests.
 - Please note that we have switched the data source for our testing data so you will have noticed a large, one-time jump in test counts on our dashboard
 - We are now collecting the testing data from a provincial database called OLIS (Ontario Laboratory Information System), which captures both the testing from our local testing centres as well as test counts from enhanced surveillance at long-term care and retirement homes.
 - This data source gives a more complete picture of testing across our region.
 - Earlier on, this provincial database was undercounting the number of tests done in the region because there were a number of labs which our samples were sent to which were not on the system yet, so our assessment centre counts were more accurate. Now the reverse is true, and these numbers from the provincial database are the most accurate numbers for our region.
- One case is currently hospitalized.
- There are currently seven active outbreaks:
 - One in a congregate care setting
 - Two workplace settings
 - Three licensed child care settings

- One in a school
- We have also added a new category for transmission type for cases still under investigation
 - Previously, “community transmission” was the default for cases still under investigation until another transmission type was identified as part of our case investigation e.g. close contact, outbreak, travel.
 - This meant that the transmission type was subject to change.
 - The new category allows us to report the cases, without assigning a transmission type until the investigation is complete.

Changes to testing

- Last week the Province announced changes to testing, in response to the increased demand for testing.
- Only seek testing if:
 - You are showing COVID-19 symptoms
 - You have been exposed to a confirmed case of the virus, as informed by Public Health or if you have received a notification through the COVID Alert app
 - This includes individuals requiring a test to return to school or day care
 - You are a resident or work in a setting that has a COVID-19 outbreak, as identified and informed by Public Health
 - You are required to seek testing as directed by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Long-Term Care
 - This includes for individuals wishing to visit someone in a long-term care facility
 - You are required to be tested before international travel
- If you do not have symptoms and do not meet any of those categories, do not seek testing at this time.

Thanksgiving

- With cases on the rise across Ontario, large family gatherings **will** increase the spread of COVID-19.
- The virus is spread by people and it spreads easily in social settings, where people may feel more relaxed about following measures.
- We have a collective responsibility to protect each other.
- You can protect yourself and your loved ones by making plans to celebrate Thanksgiving, safely.

- Plan virtual or shorter visits, without a meal, or if you choose to share a meal together, here are some additional measures to consider:
 - If dining inside, keep the windows open (weather permitting) to allow for increased air flow.
 - Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces often.
 - Practice proper hand hygiene often, especially before eating.
 - Even if your event is within the provincial indoor and outdoor gathering limits, if there are people from more than one small social bubble attending, **ensure people are practicing physical distancing and wearing masks** when not eating or drinking.
- Again, please do not plan larger gatherings. **Smaller is safer.**

Closing remarks

- With your sustained commitment to public health measures, the virus will slow.
- Your actions make a difference in our community.
- We need to re-commit to small social bubbles.
- I encourage us to **keep our social bubbles small.**
- Due to the pandemic progressing in Ontario, even though the limit is Ontario at 10 at this time, I would encourage those of us who can keep it smaller, to do so.
 - This means we only have close contact with the same, small group of people (not more than 10) **all the time** – not different groups of up to 10 people **at a time.**
- Continue to practice physical distancing with anyone outside your bubble and wear a face covering when required or when physical distance cannot be guaranteed – this includes at family gatherings or while visiting friends.
- I want to take a moment to acknowledge the work of our partners ahead of Homecoming weekend and to acknowledge the students in our community who committed to following public health measures over the weekend.
- We all have a role to play in flattening the curve for our community.
- The actions we take today, will determine our future.
- By all of us coming together, we can slow the spread.
- Thank you.