



Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH AND
EMERGENCY SERVICES

COVID-19 Update

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Highlights

- We are concerned that our trends are not improving as they are in other communities in Ontario because of the Delta variant.
- All residents are advised that the Delta variant is circulating in our community.
- Since April 1, close contact transmission has accounted for 55 per cent of all cases.
- As we enter Step 1, only having close contact with immediate household members is critical to help slow the spread of the Delta variant.

Overall trends

- We are concerned that our trends are not improving as they are in other communities in Ontario because of the Delta variant.
- Our weekly incidence rate has increased over the last week and currently sits at approximately 57 cases per 100,000.
- We currently have 383 active cases and five active outbreaks.
- Hospitalizations and ICU admissions have begun to increase again as well.

Delta variant

- Waterloo Region has been identified as an area of concern for the Delta variant.
- To date, a total of 14 cases of the Delta variant have been reported but we expect that more cases will be detected.
- All residents are advised that the Delta variant is circulating in our community.
- Like other variants, the Delta variant is more transmissible and may cause more severe illness.
- Research from Ontario's Science Table suggests that the Delta variant is about 50 per cent more transmissible and that the first dose of the vaccine is less effective against symptomatic disease compared to the Alpha (B.1.1.7) variant
- We're seeing this in our community currently in an outbreak in congregate settings in Kitchener and Waterloo, where people who are experiencing

homelessness or precariously housed are served, reported as Congregate Setting 42 on our dashboard, where we have seen a large number of cases, over a short period of time when compared to other outbreaks.

- The majority of our daily case counts are not linked to this outbreak, which means we have ongoing spread in our community and there is potential to see outbreaks like this one in other settings.
- We also know that public health measures are effective against variants of concern, including the Delta variant.

Close contact

- Locally, the main driver of transmission has been close contact.
 - Overall close contact transmission accounts for approximately 46 per cent of all cases.
 - Since April 1, close contact transmission has accounted for 55 per cent of all cases.
- This is in part due to the high transmissibility of variants, especially within households, but also in part, due to social gatherings where people from multiple households are having close contact interactions.
 - A number of reported cases over the last month have been related to social gatherings for Mother's Day and the long weekend.
- As we move into Step 1 of reopening it is critical that we only have close contact with immediate household members or one other household, exclusively, if you live alone.
- If you choose to gather with people you don't live with, continue to practice physical distancing, wear a face covering, and only gather outside.
- Recommitting to public health measures, particularly limiting close contact to only household members will help slow the spread of the Delta variant in our community.
- If you develop symptoms, stay home, self-isolate from household members, and seek testing at a local assessment centre.
- Our Isolation Site is also available for anyone who cannot safely isolate in their own home.

Closing remarks

- A gradual approach to reopening with a continued commitment to public health measures and increasing vaccination rates will help bring COVID-19, including the Delta variant, under control.
- We all have a role to play to slow the spread of COVID-19.
 - Limit close contacts by maintaining physical distancing, wearing a face covering, and gathering outdoors is critical
 - When it's your turn, get vaccinated
- Hope is still on the horizon.

- Doing these things now will help support our ability to control the spread of variants in the future. The fewer cases there are, the harder it is for variants to spread.
- Your actions matter and make a difference.
- Thank you for all that you do.