



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

## COVID-19 Update

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### Highlights

- Our indicators are still high, but stable at this time.
- To date, a total of 129 variant cases have been identified in Waterloo Region.
- Positive cases and high risk, close contacts receive different self-isolation guidance with respect to the length of time required to self-isolate.
  - The time differences reflect the infectious period (10 days) and the incubation period for the virus (14 days).

### Overall trends

- Our indicators are still high, but stable at this time.
- Our weekly incidence rate is currently between 55-60 cases per week per 100,000 residents which is a slight increase over last week.
- We are currently managing 391 active cases and 29 active outbreaks.
- Taking into account interim data, our latest per cent positivity is currently at 3.0 per cent.
- Our latest reproductive rate is now up to 1.1 which reflects that cases are increasing in Waterloo Region.
- We continue to monitor the indicators closely, but at this time we remain in the Red-Control zone of the Province's Framework.

### Variants of concern

- To date, a total of 129 variant cases have been identified in Waterloo Region.
- Of that total, 11 cases have been confirmed for the B.1.1.7 variant.
- And the remaining 118 cases have screened positive for and are awaiting confirmation of a specific variant of concern.
- This is not unexpected given provincial modeling and trends but we know that public health measures such as physical distancing, limiting close contacts, and wearing face coverings are effective at protecting against variants.

## Case and contact management

- Several weeks ago we implemented enhanced case and contact management for all positive cases of COVID-19 in response to variants of concern.
- The change allows us to ensure all positive cases are managed as though they may be a variant of concern case.
- We are using a lower threshold to determine high risk, close contacts and we are advising the asymptomatic household contacts of those contacts to also stay at home and only leave for essential reasons such as food, work, school, etc.
- This means that more people may be required to self-isolate due to an exposure to COVID-19, but it also means that we will be able to better limit and control the spread of variants in our community.
- With case and contact management there is guidance for positive cases – that reflects the infectious period **and** guidance for high risk, close contacts that reflects the incubation period of the virus.
  - If you test positive for COVID-19 you are required to self-isolate for 10 days from when your symptoms started or from the date you were tested if you did not have symptoms.
    - 10 days reflects how long you are infectious and could spread the virus to others.
  - If you are identified as a high risk, close contact you are required to self-isolate for 14 days from your last exposure to the case.
    - 14 days reflects how long it may take to develop symptoms.
    - Returning travellers are also required to quarantine for 14 days for this same reason.
- Self-isolation is not easy, but it is a critical step that helps break the chain of transmission.

## Closing remarks

- This week marks one year, since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 was identified in Waterloo Region.
- It's a difficult milestone because it represents a difficult year. To date:
  - 377,016 COVID-19 tests have been performed
  - 10,870 residents have tested positive for COVID-19
  - 360 outbreaks have been declared
  - And sadly 229 people have lost their lives, where COVID-19 was a contributing factor.
- But there is hope too – yesterday we opened the second fixed vaccination clinic with more clinics opening up in the coming weeks.
- Additionally, 33,992 doses of vaccine have been administered to date.
- There is still a way to go and will take a concerted amount of effort from every member of our community.
- We know what to do – stay committed to public health measures, limit our close contacts and stay home as much as possible.
- But I am encouraged to see more hope on the horizon. Thank you.