



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

# COVID-19 Update

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## Highlights

- Our local trends are starting to show some increases to our daily reported cases.
- Waterloo Region has some of the highest vaccination rates in Ontario but we are not done yet.
- The Delta variant is formidable and proof of vaccination is a critical tool that we can use to help limit the spread of COVID-19 while keeping businesses open.
- Ontario is in the fourth wave which is affecting all age groups. We need to achieve the highest vaccination rate possible to protect the public this fall.

## Overall trends

- In our local trends we are now starting to see some increases to our daily reported cases.
- As of yesterday's update, our case rate is at approximately 26 cases per 100,000 per week.
- Hospitalizations and outbreaks remain relatively stable at this time.
- Delta is formidable. It is twice as transmissible as the original COVID-19 virus and can spread rapidly and cause more severe illness. The risk of hospitalization is 2-3 times higher after infection with the Delta variant compared to the original virus.
- Full vaccination continues to provide strong protection against COVID-19, including Delta, and severe illness and outcomes.
- We need to accelerate vaccination, limit our number of contacts and practice public health measures to protect our community and the children who are returning to school next week.

## Vaccination status trends

- From December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 to August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, COVID-19 vaccines are estimated to have prevented 3,498 cases, 520 hospitalizations, and 73 deaths among individuals aged 18+ in our Region.
- As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, the 7-day average rate of COVID-19 (per 100,000 person-days) is 8.6x higher in unvaccinated individuals relative to fully vaccinated individuals (5.33 per 100,000 in unvaccinated versus 0.62 per 100,000 in fully vaccinated).
- Among cases reported in the last 30 days (August 3<sup>rd</sup> to September 1<sup>st</sup>):
  - 70.8% were unvaccinated
  - The majority of hospitalizations (72.2%) were unvaccinated or partially vaccinated; and
  - 100% of all cases admitted to ICU were unvaccinated
  - 2 cases had a fatal outcome, both were unvaccinated
- Waterloo Region has some of the highest vaccination rates in Ontario but we are not done yet.
- If you know someone who is waiting to get their vaccine, talk openly to them.
- Share your experience about visiting a clinic or pharmacy and talk about your side effects.
- And if you're someone who is not fully vaccinated yet, it is critical that you take advantage of the opportunity to get vaccinated now.

## Science Table projections

- New modelling released this week by the Ontario COVID-19 Science Table projects a substantial 4<sup>th</sup> wave with rapidly increasing cases if people continue to increase their contacts.
- Unless we are able to reduce transmission and accelerate vaccination, there will be significant impacts on health care system capacity as well.
- As we move indoors this fall, it will be extremely important for us to reduce our contacts including limiting large gatherings and continuing to mask and physical distance until vaccination is high enough to protect the population.

## Vaccine Certificate

- Yesterday, the Provincial Government announced plans for a vaccine certificate starting September 22.
- Residents will be required to provide proof of vaccination to access certain businesses and settings.
- This decision is welcome and is an important tool to slow the spread of the virus while allowing local businesses to remain open.
- The best way to protect yourself and our community is to get vaccinated. There are still many opportunities to get vaccinated before this provincial requirement goes into effect later this month.

## Welcoming post-secondary students

- I would like to welcome all post-secondary students joining our community this week whether you're a new or returning student.
- Post-secondary students are an important and valued part of our community in Waterloo Region.
- We all have a role to play to protect ourselves and to protect each other.
- COVID-19 is spread most commonly during close contact and the risk of spread is higher in indoor settings and crowded spaces.
- Vaccination is one of the strongest layers of protection. Along with other public health measures (masking, physical distancing), it can reduce your risk of infection and severe outcomes.
- No single measure on its own is perfect at preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- For all residents, including post-secondary students we continue to advise you to:
  - Get your vaccine – full vaccination offers the best protection against COVID-19 and severe outcomes.
  - Stay home when sick or if you have been identified as a high risk contact.
    - Seek testing at a local testing centre if you have symptoms or have been directed to do so.
  - Practice physical distancing and avoid crowded spaces.
  - Spend time outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces.
  - Wear a well-fitting face covering in indoor settings or when outdoors and physical distancing is not possible.
  - Wash your hands frequently and cover your coughs and sneezes.
  - Avoid higher-risk settings such as large gatherings, especially indoors and house parties.
- COVID-19 has impacted how we live, work and learn but with vaccination and continuing public health measures we can slow the spread of COVID-19 to protect each other and our community.
- We're wishing you all a safe and happy school year.

## Closing remarks

- Vaccination is essential to protecting our community.
- Those who are vaccinated are far less likely to get infected and have serious outcomes.
- Let's keep working together to protect each other and our community.
- Thank you for getting vaccinated.