

Ontario opens vaccine booking for children ages five to 11

By Rob Paul

Children between the ages of five and 11 are officially eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine in Ontario.

The first paediatric shots were administered in Toronto on Tuesday and online booking has now opened up to the newly eligible age group?all bookings must be done through the Ontario vaccine booking system (covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/).

Peel Region will begin taking appointments for Friday, November 26 in public clinics and continuing to January 9. More appointments will be made available regularly, so residents are encouraged to check frequently; walk-ins for children 5 to 11 years old will not be available.

Clinics will remain open until 8:30 p.m. to allow residents to book an after-school appointment.

Every clinic will be able to administer vaccines to children 5 to 11 years old, and consideration will be given to ensure the clinic environment makes children and families feel safe and comfortable.

As vaccine supply quickly expands across Peel, more than 62,000 total doses will be available for children at all Peel locations, including fixed clinics, school clinics, pharmacies, primary care and community clinics between November 26 and January 9, 2022.

In addition, the vaccine system across Peel is expanding with more than 180,000 doses available for residents eligible for booster and third doses, and those seeking their first or second dose.

?As a parent of children in this age group myself, I am thankful that we can finally offer protection to our youngest superheroes of this pandemic,? said Dr. Lawrence Loh, Peel Medical Officer of Health. ?Protecting our children with vaccine is about increasing confidence; confidence that their individual risk of rare but severe outcomes is greatly diminished, confidence that in-person learning can be maintained, and confidence in ensuring that gatherings with family and friends are just a little bit safer. Each child that access protection for themselves also helps us draw closer to making this disease less novel for all of us. I could not be prouder, and I thank them for being true heroes.?

Preparing your children for vaccination can spark concerns and questions for parents, care givers and children themselves. Peel has resources to help navigate these feelings at peelregion.ca/coronavirus.

With the expanded eligibility to children ages five to 11, Peel's vaccine coverage should see a rise in the coming months. Currently 74.7 per cent of all residents are fully vaccinated and 78.1 per cent have at least dose.

Those numbers continue to approach the 90 per cent threshold when looking at just eligible age groups with 85.7 per cent of all eligible (12+) with two doses and 89.5 per cent with at least one?the numbers are similar when looking at just adults (18+) with 85.9 per cent at two doses and 89.6 per cent with at least one.

In total, the Region has administered 2,561,710 doses of the vaccine with 1,326,299 with at least one dose, 1,210,977 fully vaccinated, and 24,434 with a third dose.

COVID-19 cases are seeing a rise in Peel though with 369 new cases this week to bring the Region total to 119,009?there was one new death to bring the total to 1,032.

Caledon saw 17 new cases this week to bring the Town's all-time total to 4,965?there were no new deaths with the count sitting at 22.

To book a vaccine in the Region of Peel, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment.

To download or print a copy of your proof of vaccination, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccine-booking-support#proof-of-vaccination. To learn more about the official QR code system Ontario has implemented and to access yours, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/get-proof/.