

Ontario tightens COVID-19 restrictions as Omicron variant continues to spread

By Rob Paul

As of this past Sunday, new COVID-19 restrictions were put in place by the Government of Ontario as a result of the Omicron variant.

There is now a 50 per cent capacity limit in gyms, restaurants, concert venues, and theatres as well as a limit of 10 for indoor social gathers and 20 for outdoors.

"Throughout this entire pandemic, we've never faced an enemy like Omicron given how quickly it spreads," said Premier Doug Ford. "We need to do everything we can to slow its spread as we continue to dramatically ramp up capacity to get as many booster shots into arms as possible. Doing so is the best way to safeguard our hospital and intensive care units."

Along with the capacity limits, there are specific protective measures being put in at restaurants, sporting events, theatres, and venues. There will be a 10-person limit at tables restaurants; people must remain seated at venues and theatres; restaurants and bars will be required to close by 11 p.m.; food and beverages will be prohibited at indoor sporting events, concerts, and theatres; and the sale of alcohol will be restricted after 10 p.m.

"As the rapidly spreading Omicron variant becomes the dominant strain of COVID-19 in Ontario, it is necessary to apply additional public health and workplace safety measures to reduce transmission, protect our health system and save lives," said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. "We all have a role to play in keeping ourselves, friends, families, neighbours and communities safe this holiday season. Please follow all public measures and get vaccinated with your first, second or booster dose if you have not done so already. Omicron will not take a holiday."

As residents in Peel prepare for the holidays, there were 2,367 new COVID cases this week—nearly four times the number of new cases in the Region as last week—to bring the overall case count to 122,803. There were also three more deaths to bring the total to 1,036.

In Caledon, there were 124 new cases—there were 53 new cases the previous week—to bring the Town's cumulative total to 5,184. There were no new deaths with the number remaining at 22.

The Region continues to emphasize the importance of vaccine coverage as the new variant spreads and has now administered 2,745,242 doses of the vaccine. 1,363,249 individuals have one dose, 1,225,672 have both doses, and 156,321 residents have received a third dose booster.

Of all residents in Peel, 82.2 per cent have one dose and 77.1 per cent have two with those 12 and older at 91.8 per cent single dose coverage and 88.4 per cent two dose coverage. When factoring in the newly eligible five to 11-year-old residents, Peel has 86.7 per cent single dose coverage and 81.4 per cent two dose coverage.

To book a vaccine in the Region of Peel, visit www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/vaccine/book-appointment/. To schedule a third dose booster, visit covid19.ontariohealth.ca/.

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/.