

COVID-19 Update for Partners

October 28, 2021

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Key Local Issues

COVID-19 Vaccines for people who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy

- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant, breastfeeding or planning a pregnancy is safe, effective, and highly recommended.
- The risk of complications or severity from COVID-19 during pregnancy or postpartum far outweigh any potential risk from COVID-19 vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines cannot make you sick with COVID-19, or damage or change your DNA.
- A study of more than 35,000 pregnant and/or breastfeeding individuals who received a COVID-19 vaccination found no difference in the rate of side effects compared with non-pregnant individuals.
- The antibodies made following COVID-19 vaccination also pass to babies, which may keep them safe after birth.
- Visit the health unit's website for more [information](#).

Annual Flu Shot + COVID-19

- Flu season is upon us and the health unit is now distributing the influenza vaccine to hospitals, long-term care homes and health care providers to immunize individuals at higher risk of hospitalization and flu-related complications, such as pneumonia, heart attack or, in some cases, death. Those at higher risk include children under five, people who are pregnant, those 65 years and older and those with pre-existing health conditions. People can also access flu vaccine through their local pharmacy.
- The flu vaccine is offered free of charge to anyone over the age of six months who either lives, works, or goes to school in Ontario and will be available to the general public in early November.
- It is important to remember that the flu vaccine is different from the COVID-19 vaccine and does not protect against COVID-19. The flu vaccine helps reduce the risk of getting the flu, and of getting the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.
- The [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\) now recommends](#) that COVID-19 vaccine may be given at the same time as the influenza vaccine.

COVID-19 and Schools

- Keeping students safe during in-person learning continues to be a top priority of the health unit.
- While the province plans to slowly lift all public health and workplace safety measures over the next few months, no changes to school COVID-19 public health measures have been announced at this time.

- Schools should continue to follow the Ministry of Education COVID-19 guidance documents, as well as school board plans and protocols.

Plan to Reopen Ontario

- On Friday, Oct. 22, Premier Ford released the province’s [Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage COVID-19 for the Long-Term](#), which outlines the province’s gradual approach to lifting remaining public health and workplace safety measures by March 2022. The plan will be guided by the ongoing assessment of key public health and health care indicators and supported by local or regional tailored responses to COVID-19.
- The first phase of the province’s plan came into effect on Oct. 25, when Ontario lifted capacity limits in settings where proof of vaccination is required, such as restaurants, bars and other food or drink establishments; indoor areas of sports and recreational facilities such as gyms and where personal physical fitness trainers provide instruction; casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments; and indoor meeting and event spaces. Limits will also be lifted in certain outdoor settings.
- Further amendments were made to [O. Reg. 364/20](#) on **October 28, 2021**, including removing capacity limits for outdoor organized public events (e.g., outdoor parades, outdoor memorial services) as well as most other outdoor settings where capacity limits remain, while requiring a mask or face covering be worn if physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) is not possible. See [O. Reg. 364/20](#) for more information and additional amendments.
- Please visit the [Ontario government website](#) for full details and the [Business page](#) of our website for further guidance.

Celebrating Halloween

- We anticipate that many people will be celebrating Halloween this weekend and remind everyone to follow safety precautions to help protect against spreading COVID-19, including staying home if you have [symptoms](#), even if they are mild. For tips on how to safely trick or treat, including masks and costumes, and giving out candy, please refer to our [website](#).

*Dr. Gardner’s next media briefing will take place on **Wednesday, November 3, 2021**, at 1:30 p.m. Previous SMDHU MOH media briefings are posted on the SMDHU [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.*

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Data (As of October 28, 2021)					
Total Confirmed Cases	Active Cases <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	New cases Oct 17-23 <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	Total deaths <small>(# change from previous week)</small>	Current Hospitalizations <small>(# change from previous week)</small>	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated* <small>(Target 90%)</small>
13,971	166 <small>(+4%)</small>	122 <small>(+10%)</small>	264 <small>(+2)</small>	9 <small>(no change)</small>	82.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the 122 new cases reported last week, 74% were unvaccinated, 5% were partially vaccinated, and 21% were fully vaccinated. From August 29 to October 23, the rate of COVID-19 infection among the unvaccinated vaccine-eligible Simcoe Muskoka population is 10 times higher than it is for the fully vaccinated population, and the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations is 19 times higher. There are 6 active outbreaks (four in educational settings and two in institutional settings). 					
More local data available at: SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard					

Local Media Updates *(Since Oct. 21, 2021 Partner Update)*

- COVID-19 sweeps through Newmarket men's hockey league ([article](#))
- Penetanguishene superjail outbreak jumps to 23 COVID-19 cases ([article](#))
- GBGH visitors required to show proof of vaccination starting next month ([article](#))
- 13 Simcoe County schools report cases of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- How many staff at Muskoka school boards have received the COVID-19 vaccine? ([article](#))
- TIMELINE: Tracking COVID-19 cases in Muskoka schools for 2021-22 year ([article](#))
- Barrie's mayor reacts as the province lifts more restrictions ([article](#))
- Simcoe-Muskoka eclipses 900,000-dose milestone on COVID-19 vaccinations ([article](#))
- Oro-Medonte man succumbs to COVID-19: Health unit ([article](#))
- Participating in Halloween this year? Take COVID-19 safety precautions ([article](#))
- Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston announces proof of vaccination policy for visitors ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Data

Ontario <i>(As of Oct. 28, 2021)</i>					
Total Cases	Active Cases <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	New cases Oct 22-28 <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	Total deaths <small>(change from previous week)</small>	Current Hospitalizations <small>(change from previous week)</small>	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated* <small>(Target 90%)</small>
598,840	3,018 <small>(-10%)</small>	2,560 <small>(-10%)</small>	9,865 <small>(+38)</small>	197 <small>(-77)</small>	84%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of new cases, 53% are unvaccinated, 4% are partially vaccinated, 33% are fully vaccinated and 10% have an unknown vaccination status. • In Ontario, unvaccinated individuals are 7 times more likely to catch COVID-19, 23 times more likely to be in hospital, and 34 times more likely to be a patient in the intensive care unit compared with people who are vaccinated. • Areas with the highest rate of active cases per 100,000 population are: Sudbury and District (95), Chatham-Kent (49), Lambton (41), Eastern Ontario (37), and Windsor-Essex County (34). <p>Weekly highlights from Oct 10 – 16 compared to the previous week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreases were seen in number of outbreaks, deaths and number of weekly cases dropped 24.5% (the largest decrease since June 2021). • The rate of disease decreased across all age groups with the sharpest decline in children aged 5-11. <p>For more national data, see Ontario COVID-19 case data, Public Health Ontario Data Tool, daily and weekly epidemiologic summaries</p>					
Canada <i>(As of Oct. 27, 2021)</i>					
Total Cases <small>(includes confirmed and probable cases)</small>	Active Cases <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	New Cases in the last 7 days <small>(% change from previous week)</small>	Total Deaths <small>(change from previous week)</small>	Population 12+ fully vaccinated	
1,706,884	25,264 <small>(-15%)</small>	16,626 <small>(-17%)</small>	28,881 <small>(+237)</small>	83%	
<p>Weekly case highlights for Oct 10 - 16 compared to the previous week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The weekly number of new cases increased in Nova Scotia, all other provinces and territories experienced no change or decreases. 					

- On average the rate of new COVID-19 cases among unvaccinated individuals was 8 times higher, and the rate of COVID-19 hospitalized cases among unvaccinated individuals was 25 times higher than in fully vaccinated individuals.

For more national data, see: [COVID-19 daily epidemiology update](#)

Global (as of 15:40 CEST October 28, 2021)		
Total confirmed cases	New Cases Oct 18-24 (% change from previous week)	Total Deaths (Change from previous week)
244,897,177	2,965,772 (+4.81%)	4,970,429 (+5.27%)

- During the week of 18 to 24 October 2021, the global number of new cases increased slightly (4%) compared to that of the previous week, with the European Union accounting for more than half (57%) of weekly cases and the only region again reporting an increase in cases.
- In the last week the highest number of global cases were reported in: United States, United Kingdom, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

For more international data, see: [WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#) and WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19 - [26 October 2021](#)

Provincial, National and Global Media Updates *(Since Oct. 21 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Takes Further Action to Protect Schools ([news release](#))
- Introducing New Legislation to Fix Long-Term Care ([news release](#))
- Expanding High-Quality, Accessible Virtual Learning ([news release](#))
- Extending Temporary Wage Enhancement for Personal Support Workers ([news release](#))
- Launching New and Improved Inspections Program for Long-Term Care ([new release](#))
- Releases Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage COVID-19 for the Long-Term ([news release](#))
- Expands Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care Program ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Take-home COVID-19 tests coming to all Ontario schools ([article](#))
- Hospital vaccine mandate case in court ([article](#))
- Ontario regulator says anti-COVID-19 vaccine doctor can no longer practice medicine ([article](#))
- Cuts expected in TTC service when vaccine mandate kicks in: agency ([article](#))
- Pressure mounts on Doug Ford to make COVID-19 vaccinations mandatory for students ([article](#))
- Ontario is unveiling new long-term care legislation. Here's what advocates want in it ([article](#))
- Ontario government lifts capacity limits for organized events outdoors, potentially paving the way for return of some Santa Claus parades ([article](#))
- Long-term care home charged for unsafe work conditions after nurse's COVID-19 death ([article](#))
- Man charged in fraudulent COVID-19 vaccine certificate investigation: police ([article](#))
- Ontario could see 50,000 education workers fired if vaccines mandated: Lecce ([article](#))
- Ontario school board staff claiming medical exemptions for COVID-19 vaccines at far higher rate than expected ([article](#))
- 2 unions call on Ontario government to step up protection of hospital workers ([article](#))
- Anti-vax Ottawa mother banned from giving teenage son COVID vaccine advice ([article](#))
- Why is there a high rate of vaccine hesitancy among pregnant people? ([podcast](#))

- Latest modelling data suggests some continued health measures due to colder weather ([article](#))
- Ontario no longer providing Canada with COVID-19 flight exposure notifications ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on October 22, 2021 ([statement](#)) ([remarks](#))
- Transport Canada introducing new measures for the reintroduction of direct flights from Morocco on October 29, 2021 ([news release](#))
- Announces targeted COVID-19 support measures to create jobs and growth ([news release](#))
- The Canada Worker Lockdown Benefit ([backgrounder](#))
- Targeting COVID-19 Support Measures ([backgrounder](#))
- Announces accelerated delivery of COVID-19 paediatric vaccine pending regulatory authorization ([news release](#))
- Using Canada's COVID-19 proof of vaccination for travel ([backgrounder](#))

Other National News:

- B.C. is first in North America to offer COVID-19 booster shot to general population ([article](#))
- Food banks, already in crisis mode due to pandemic, bracing for more visits as cost of living rises ([article](#))
- Nearly 20 per cent of Canadians resigned amid pandemic due to work stress: survey ([article](#))
- Contracting COVID-19 may provide some immunity. But still get vaccinated, scientists say ([article](#))
- Group of federal employees launches fight against vaccine mandate ([article](#))
- Four Alberta doctors launch lawsuit against health authority over mandatory vaccine policy ([article](#))
- How regulatory agencies, not the courts, are imposing COVID-19 vaccine mandates ([article](#))
- Moderna says its low-dose COVID vaccine generates immune response in kids ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Not the time to 'freely go wherever,' says Tam as non-essential travel advisory lifts ([article](#))
- For this preteen struggling with long-term COVID-19, the vaccine can't come fast enough ([article](#))
- People with allergic reaction to COVID-19 vaccine can still get second dose: NACI ([article](#))
- Pfizer says COVID-19 vaccine more than 90% effective in kids ([article](#))
- Alberta put its contact-tracing system on life support. Can it be resuscitated? ([article](#))
- 'Jobs at risk': Experts fear wave of layoffs, business closures following end of federal wage and rent subsidy programs ([article](#))
- Don't expect EI if you lose your job for not being vaccinated, minister says ([article](#))
- There's a children's COVID-19 vaccine awaiting approval in Canada. What do we know about it? ([article](#))
- Manitoba churches lose court challenge against COVID-19 restrictions ([article](#))
- Canadian Medical Association calls for stricter COVID-19 measures in Saskatchewan ([article](#))
- Canada quietly lifts blanket travel advisory related to COVID-19 ([article](#))

International Updates

- CDC says guidance still to come on whether U.S. to require land-border COVID-19 test ([article](#))
- World faces shortage of syringes as COVID vaccine doses rise ([article](#))
- FDA advisory committee recommends authorizing Pfizer's COVID vaccine for kids ([article](#))
- Vaccine reluctance in Eastern Europe brings high COVID cost ([article](#))
- Merck agrees to let other drugmakers produce its COVID-19 pill ([article](#))
- Generic anti-depressant drug may reduce COVID hospitalizations ([article](#))
- U.S. FDA advisers weigh Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in children ([article](#))
- Russian COVID cases hit record high as eastern Europe imposes new curbs ([article](#))
- The unvaccinated can expect COVID reinfection every 16 months, study finds ([article](#))

- Melbourne residents flock to bars, salons after enduring 262 days of COVID-19 restrictions ([article](#))
- COVID vaccine: CDC expands booster rollout, OKs mixing shots ([article](#))
- WHO weekly operational update on COVID-19 – 25 October 2021 ([report](#))

SMDHU Resources

Recent changes to SMDHU [website](#):

COVID-19 Vaccination

- **NEW PAGE:** Children 5 to 11 years ([link](#))
- **NEW EXPANDER BAR:** Vaccine information for people who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or recently pregnant ([link](#))
- Pop-up clinics ([link](#))

Going to School

- **NEW:** [There is a Case/Outbreak at my School or Child Care](#) (video)

Operating Your Business Safely/ Partners and Municipalities

REVISED Guidance documents

- Food premises ([link](#))
- Retail businesses and shopping malls ([link](#))
- Outdoor recreational amenities ([link](#))
- Workplace safety plan, screening and proof of vaccination ([link](#))
- Recreational water facilities ([link](#))
- Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities ([link](#))
- Faith-based organizations ([link](#))

HealthSTATS:

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)

SMDHU Health Connection:

- SMDHU Health Connection responds to calls and emails about COVID-19. Contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext. 5829 or via [email](#), Monday-Friday - 8:30am-4:30pm
- **PLEASE NOTE:** We are experiencing high call volumes and our response times are longer than usual.

Credible Sources of Information

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Centre for Effective Practice COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)