

120 new cases per day projected across York Region through October: Public Health

As new COVID-19 cases across York Region see some so-called 'breakthrough' cases amongst fully vaccinated residents, York Region Public Health says the area could see as many as 120 new cases of the virus per day through into 'late October.'

This was the message delivered at the start of the week by Dr. Richard Gould, Associate Medical Officer of Health for the Region of York.

'Our community is continuing to experience an increase in COVID-19 cases,' he said. 'Based on local data, our modelling projects this will continue into the fall with as many as 120 cases per day into late October when the cooler weather drives people indoors. While the majority of new cases we're seeing are among unvaccinated individuals, including children under the age of 12 with unvaccinated household contacts, we're also seeing 'breakthrough' cases, meaning those who are fully immunized with both COVID-19 vaccine doses.

'No vaccine offers 100 per cent protection against COVID-19. However, those who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine can become infected [and] should experience milder symptoms and are much less likely to become severely ill, require hospitalization or be admitted into the ICU. This speaks to the importance of getting vaccinated, not only to protect yourself but those around you and the most vulnerable in the community, including children under the age of 12 years of age who are not currently eligible to receive the vaccine.'

By Monday, 75 per cent of the York Region population aged 12 and older have received both doses of vaccine, many more, he said, 'have yet to roll up their sleeves.' Dr. Gould encouraged everyone who hasn't received both doses to visit walk-in vaccine clinics (listed at York.ca/COVID19vaccine) as soon as possible.

If you have not yet received a vaccine, he said it is 'still okay to have questions' but urged residents to discuss their concerns with their doctors, primary health care providers, or York Region Public Health nurses in order to make an informed decision. Those looking to speak to a Public Health nurse can do so by calling 1-800-361-5653.

'The recent increase in cases is also a good reminder that COVID-19 is not going away any time soon,' he said. 'These next few months will require all of us to continue to remain vigilant. This means continuing to follow public health guidelines such as wearing a mask, maintaining a physical distance from others, and practicing good hand hygiene, even if you're fully vaccinated. We're asking residents to make smart choices going forward. We're asking parents to ensure they screen their children every day before going to daycare or to school. We're asking people to consider the gatherings they are attending. Are they outdoors or indoors? How many guests are attending? Is there enough space to maintain a distance of two metres? Should you be wearing a mask even though it is not required? We're seeing more and more cases resulting in close contact transmission. Avoid close contact with someone who is sick and if you can't, be sure to wear a mask. Please continue to follow public health measures like washing your hands, cleaning and disinfecting' and stay home. If you're feeling unwell. If you have COVID-19 symptoms, I urge you to get tested.

'It is nobody's wish to further disrupt people's lives, but we will also not hesitate to implement targeted Public Health measures as needed to keep our community safe. Our community has put forth a tremendous effort in combatting COVID-19 over the past 18 months, but we must ask for a little bit more as we attempt to conquer the last mile.'

LOCAL STATS

Since the start of the global pandemic, Aurora has seen a total of 1,870 cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday, August 17. 7 cases remain active while 48 have proved fatal. 1,815 cases are now marked as resolved.

Of the 7 active cases, 4 are attributed to local transmission, close contact or unknown transmission, 2 are linked to travel, and 1 to institutional.

68.9 per cent of cases in the last week are unvaccinated cases among the eligible population aged 12 and up.

Between Monday, August 9 and Monday, August 13, York Region Public Health confirmed 5 new cases of the virus.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter