

## Booster is still needed even if you've already had COVID-19: Public Health

If you've already had COVID-19, your booster is still your best line of defence against severe outcomes, according to Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region's Medical Officer of Health.

In his weekly update on the local fight against COVID-19, the Region's top doctor said that while uptake on third and fourth doses of a COVID-19 vaccine had been encouraging York Region-wide, questions were still being asked whether they were still necessary after a bout of the virus.

?Over 30,000 fourth doses have been administered to York Region residents 60 years of age or older [and] the fourth dose is particularly important for those over 70 and 80,? said Dr. Pakes. ?So, we strongly encourage older York Region residents to get their booster as soon as possible. Anyone above the age of 12 should now have three doses and children 5 ? 11 should have two doses.

?The protection provided by the vaccine [after experiencing COVID] is longer-lasting and better than having COVID-19 disease and it is also far safer. If you haven't received a fourth dose, please make an appointment.?

While the Region continues its push for boosters, there are hopeful signs on the horizon, he added.

?It was recently shared in a GTA newspaper column that COVID-19 reports are now somewhat like speaking about the weather: it is hard to say something new, but we still need to know about changing conditions so we can be prepared and respond,? said Dr. Pakes. ?But, in fact there are new developments with COVID-19 and our response each and every hour, every day and every week, so I look forward to continuing to share these updates with you.

?COVID-19 transmission is still very high in the community due to the Omicron BA2 variant. We continue to see stabilizing signals in our wastewater data. The status in most areas of the Province is showing a similar plateau and we're hopeful that it will soon show a steady decrease. The number of patients in York Region hospitals and across the Province is still very high, but not increasing as steeply as it had been previously. Our institutional outbreaks are high but stable as well and test positivity is declining somewhat. These are all signs that we're heading in the right direction, but the pandemic and its impacts are not over yet. In particular, we all need to take action collectively to keep ourselves well, but also to prevent infection among those who might become ill enough to need hospital care.?

### LOCAL STATS

As of Tuesday, May 3, Aurora was experiencing 56 active PCR-confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to York Region Public Health ? but the true number is likely much higher.

Since the start of the global pandemic, the community has seen a total of 4,751 PCR-confirmed cases of COVID-19, 4,633 of which are now marked as recovered.

There have been 62 fatalities attributed to the virus.

By the start of the week, 90.4 per cent of Aurora residents aged five and up have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. 88.2 per cent of residents in the same age bracket have received two doses.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter