

Gyms, restaurants set to re-open Monday with further easing eyed for March

Restaurants and gyms will be able to welcome patrons once again on Monday following re-opening plans announced by the Province last week.

These businesses will be allowed to re-open at 50 per cent capacity, along with retailers that do not fall under the banner of grocery stores or pharmacies, cinemas, meeting and event spaces, recreation facilities, and shopping malls.

Additionally, spectator areas at arenas will once again be opened.

Other restrictions will remain in place until at least February 21, which is when the Province has targeted the removing of capacity limits in indoor public settings where proof of vaccination is required, including restaurants, permitting spectator activity at sporting events, concert venues and theatres at 50 per cent capacity, and increasing social gathering limits to 25 people indoors and 100 people outdoors. March 14 is pencilled in as the next step in the re-opening plan, with the lifting of limits in all indoor public settings while maintaining proof of vaccination requirements in existing settings.

"The evidence tells us that the measures we put in place to blunt the transmission of Omicron are working," said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. "We can be confident that the worst is behind us and that we are now in a position to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures. While February will continue to present its own challenges, given current trends these are challenges we are confident we can measure."

Added Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health: "Thanks to the efforts of Ontarians going to get their booster dose and adhering to current public health and workplace safety measures, we are in a position where we can begin planning to gradually and cautiously ease restrictions."

"The months ahead will require continued vigilance, as we don't want to cause any further disruption to people's everyday lives. We must continue to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities by following the measures in place and by vaccinating those who have not yet received their doses."

By Brock Weir
Editor
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter