

New cases of COVID-19 in York Region trending towards single digit increases

Five case spike in Aurora on Tuesday: Region

New active cases in York Region are trending towards a daily increase in the single digits, according to Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

As infection rates in York Region show encouraging trends, the number of active cases of the virus within Aurora is once again back in the double digits after beginning the week holding at 8 active cases.

"Our new cases seem to be in the single digits now and that is a remarkable achievement given a population of 1.2 million," said Dr. Kurji in his weekly update on Monday morning. "So, I do wish to thank all of you for continuing to exercise vigilance with respect to our efforts for COVID-19 control.

"Our public health inspectors have recently gone into three malls in York Region to determine what the compliance is with face coverings and, to my surprise, we have found approximately 97 per cent of individuals wearing face masks. So, again, my thanks to all of you for your compliance with the public health directives."

But, other trends are somewhat more worrisome.

More cases of COVID-19 are being reported in the 15 to 19 age bracket, a trend which has prompted the Region to retool its communications towards "peer networks" regularly accessed by this demographic.

Dr. Kurji also said that bars and restaurants could be centres of transmission as York Region acclimatizes to new measures in Stage 3.

"Lessons from other jurisdictions tell us that bars and restaurants are also at high risk of transmitting infections," he said. "When individuals spend some time in the restaurants, it is possible that they get inebriated and physical distancing goes out the window. We urge patrons and business owners to continue exercising vigilance. We, on our part, will be paying surprise visits to these establishments to determine compliance. We prefer to use the educational approach as this seems to give us the best results.

"As we enter Stage 3, we can expect an increase in the numbers of cases, or possibly a plateauing in their decline. Therefore, it is extremely important that we continue with all the personal hygiene measures in order to minimize this increase. I remind you again to physically distance by two metres, to ensure you're wearing masks whenever you are in indoor public places or on transit, to wash your hands frequently, to disinfect surfaces that are commonly used, to stay at home if you are ill, and certainly if you have mild COVID-19 symptoms or believe you have been in contact with a case, do access the testing that is available at the three assessment centres, at the three hospitals and they are open seven days a week."

WHERE THINGS STAND IN AURORA

By Tuesday afternoon, Aurora was grappling with 12 active cases of COVID-19, with five new cases reported between Monday, July 27 at 5 p.m. and the same time the following afternoon.

11 of the active cases are related to local transmission or close contact, with the 1 remaining case attributed to an institutional outbreak outside Aurora.

As of July 28, there have been 137 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within Aurora, and 110 of these cases are now marked as recovered.

15 cases have proved fatal.

Region-wide, there are 229 active cases in York. There have been a total of 3,265 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in York Region since the start of the pandemic, 251 of which resulted in death.

By Brock Weir