

Vaccination efforts shift to back-to-school plan

As some York Region students plan for a return-to-school as early as the next month, area vaccination efforts are shifting to a younger demo as the clock ticks down to the start of a new academic year.

York Region Public Health continues to encourage anyone who is eligible to get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as possible. But, if you're between the ages of 12 and 17, time is running short to ensure you're protected before returning to school.

“With September around the corner, many parents and students are beginning to think about a return to school,” said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health. “Some York Region students will return as early as August 24, 2021, meaning the last chance to receive a second dose and best protection [against COVID-19] prior to returning will be August 10, 2021.”

People ages 12 and up who live, work or go to school in York Region are eligible to receive their doses either by appointment or simply by walking in to their most convenient vaccination sites. For more information on locations and appointments, visit York.ca/COVID19vaccine.

Additionally this week, York Region Public Health mobile vaccination units hit the road to several local schools to allow students the chance to receive their shots in familiar settings.

“The most important thing parents can do to ensure the return to school is safe is to get vaccinated and to ensure their children ages 12 to 17 are fully vaccinated,” said Dr. Kurji. “Please don't delay as the window of opportunity is closing to get as many eligible youth fully vaccinated as we can before school begins. The best and longest-lasting protection against COVID-19 comes about two weeks after the second dose is received. The more people, including eligible adults and youth, we have vaccinated within our community the less chance the virus gets circulated.

“York Region public health is also working closely with school boards and other community partners to make accessing the COVID-19 vaccine as seamless and convenient as possible for youth with disabilities and their families. We are committed to ensuring those with disabilities can receive the accommodations needed to get a first or second vaccine dose safely and comfortably.”

As of Monday, July 26, 80.7 per cent of York Region residents ages 12 and up have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. 69.8 per cent of this same demographic are now fully vaccinated.

Aurora continues to grapple with 4 active cases of COVID-19 as of July 27.

To date, the community has seen a total of 1,853 confirmed cases of the virus, 48 of which have proved fatal. 1,801 cases are now marked as recovered.

Of the 4 active cases, all are attributed to local transmission, close contact or unknown exposure.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter