

Vaccines reach nearly 40 per cent in York Region

Vaccine rates in York Region are nearing the 40 per cent mark despite a continuing shortage of doses.

By the start of this week, approximately 36 per cent of York Region residents 18 years of age and older have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, according to Dr. Fareen Karachiwalla, Associate Medical Officer of Health for York Region.

Nearly 378,000 vaccine doses were in arms by Monday, April 26 as eligibility groups continue to expand, she said.

"This means that about 36 per cent of York Region's population aged 18+ have received at least one dose of vaccine and we're working to push this number even higher as quickly as vaccine supply allows," she said, noting the Region's recent move to expand eligibility to residents 60 years of age or older, with this threshold lowered to 35+ in several hotspot postal codes in the Cities of Vaughan and Markham.

"Pregnant individuals and one essential caregiver are now eligible under the highest risk health conditions as identified by the Province," said Dr. Karachiwalla. "The Provincial government has made a number of announcements regarding vaccine eligibility including making vaccines available to those 18 years of age or older living in hotspot postal code areas. While the Province has identified 13 high priority postal code areas in York Region with high COVID-19 rates, high levels of hospitalization and deaths, York Region is unable to offer vaccines to all those identified areas and age groups at the same time because of the current shortage in vaccine supply, unfortunately."

Instead, the Region has prioritized six postal codes - five in Vaughan (L4L, L6A, L4K, L4J, L4H) and one in Vaughan (L3S).

"Vaccines are available to all individuals living in this area who are 35 years of age or older," she said. "Now this does not mean we won't get to the remaining identified postal codes in the areas for the 18+ population living there, but we do intend to continue to expand the vaccine program to additional hotspot postal codes and younger age groups as vaccine supply allows."

"Health Canada has assessed and continues to review all COVID-19 vaccines currently approved to ensure that they are safe, meaning very low rates of side-effects, including possible rare but serious ones, and highly effective at preventing COVID-19 infection, serious illness, hospitalization or death. The best vaccine to get is still the first one available to you. Remember, the risk of COVID-19 and suffering serious illness from it is high right now in Ontario because of the high case counts, unpredictable variants of concern and variants of interest. The quicker we can immunize our residents with these safe and effective vaccines that are monitored very closely every day, the better off we all can be. While we're asking you to wait your turn, when it is your turn please don't wait."

To check your eligibility and/or to book your vaccine through the Region's portal, visit York.ca/covid19vaccine.

Elsewhere pharmacies across the Province, including 11 in Aurora, continue to administer AstraZeneca vaccines to adults 40 and older.

Participating locations include:

Aurora IDA Pharmacy (25 William Graham Drive)

Care Drugs (24 Orchard Heights Blvd, Unit 103)

Family Drug Mart (9 Borealis Avenue, Unit 5)

Loblaw Pharmacy (15900 Bayview Avenue)

Pharmasave Aurora (126 Wellington Street West, Unit 105)

Shoppers Drug Mart (14729 Yonge Street)

Shoppers Drug Mart (446 Hollandview Trail)

Sobeys Pharmacy (15500 Bayview Avenue)

Wal-Mart Pharmacy (135 First Commerce Drive)

Wellington Pharmacy (300 Wellington Street East, Unit 2)

Wellness Clinical Pharmacy (15450 Yonge Street, Unit 2)

For a complete list of participating pharmacies, including how to book an appointment at each location, visit covid-19.ontario.ca/vaccine-locations and select Aurora from the drop-down menu.

WORKPLACE OUTBREAKS

York Region Public Health is now shining a light on sectors most impacted by workplace outbreaks of COVID-19.

Since the start of the pandemic, there had been 3,881 cases of the virus attributed to workplace outbreaks as of Monday, April 26.

At press time, there were 20 open workplace outbreaks with 444 now marked as closed or resolved.

1,409 York Region residents have been impacted by workplace outbreaks with 2,438 cases involving workers living outside of the Region.

12 deaths have been attributed to the workplace.

45 per cent of workplace outbreaks involve product/material manufacturing (9 cases), 10 per cent in agriculture, government and health, service, and transportation respectively, with 5 per cent of cases each attributed to food manufacturing, grocery and food retail, and general retail.

AURORA STATS

An 86-year-old man is Aurora's 43rd fatality attributed to COVID-19, the first in more than a month.

The man lost his battle with the virus on Friday, April 23, at Southlake Regional Health Centre.

He first experienced symptoms on Thursday, April 15 and received a positive test the same day.

York Region Public Health lists his exposure to the virus as close contact.

Since the start of the pandemic, Aurora has seen a total of 1,575 confirmed cases of COVID-19 as of Tuesday, April 27. 1,424 cases are now marked as recovered.

Active cases total 108, a significant decline from last week when case counts neared 190.

There have been 43 deaths attributed to the virus.

Of the active cases, 104 are attributed to local transmission or close contact, 2 to institutional outbreak, 1 to workplace, and 1 to schools.

477 of Aurora's cumulative cases are identified as belonging to variants of concern, according to York Region Public Health, 37 of which are of confirmed lineage. 440 have been detected with mutations, but the lineage has not yet been identified.

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