

Vaccine verification app ready to roll ahead of Friday

As we get accustomed to showing our proof of vaccination in many settings across Ontario, the Province's Verify Ontario app is now available for download.

The Verify Ontario app will go hand-in-hand with enhanced vaccine certificates which now come with an official QR code to make it easier for businesses like restaurants to quickly allow access to customers while, in turn, protecting the privacy of the individual.

"I want to thank every Ontarian for their patience and cooperation as we've implemented our proof of vaccination policy," said Premier Doug Ford in a statement. "The enhanced vaccine certificates and Verify Ontario app will give our businesses further comfort in their ability to operate safely as we take further steps to protect people's privacy. These certificates remain a key element of our plan to protect the gains we have made while avoiding future lockdowns."

The enhanced vaccine certificates are now available for download through the Province's COVID-19 vaccination portal at covid-19.ontario.ca. Here, people can save the electronic version of their vaccine certificate with a QR code to their phone or print a paper copy.

"Businesses must accept both electronic and paper versions," says the Ministry of Health. "In addition, while the current vaccine receipt without a QR code remains valid and will continue to be accepted, the Province is encouraging individuals to download their enhanced vaccine certificate with a QR code as an easier, more secure and convenient way to have their proof of vaccine verified. Ontarians will need to show a piece of identification with their name and date of birth along with their proof of vaccination when visiting select businesses and organizations."

The enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code is built to the SMART Health Card standard adopted by the Federal government in conjunction with the provinces and territories, the Ontario government notes, and "to support Ontarians who are travelling internationally, Ontario is also including the Government of Canada logo on the enhanced vaccine certificate."

"Getting vaccinated is the single most important thing Ontarians can do to protect themselves and their communities," said Health Minister Christine Elliott in a statement. "We are making it simpler, faster and more convenient for Ontarians to show their proof of vaccination, allowing them to safely access businesses and other settings across the Province."

SCHOOL TESTING CENTRE OPENS ON GEORGE STREET

The former George Street Public School building at 115 George Street has been pressed into service as a community-based COVID-19 testing centre for schools and child care centres

The clinic opened Wednesday, October 13, and will operate on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 2 ? 7 p.m. Individuals with symptoms of COVID-19 or close contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case can visit the walk-in facility from 2 ? 5 p.m. on the designated days while individuals with no known exposure or COVID-19 symptoms can attend from 5.15 ? 7 p.m.

"With the cold and flu season upon us, staying home when any symptoms develop and getting a proper test at an assessment centre is what we all need to do," says Dr. Richard Gould, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the Region of York. "Testing sites have opened for all York Region students, school and childcare staff. These locations are drop-in. No appointment is needed and [the clinics] offer both nasal swabs and saliva tests. The on-site clinician will help determine the best option for you."

SOUTHLAKE MOVES ASSESSMENT CENTRE

A further shift in testing has also been announced by Southlake Regional Health Centre.

The local hospital has announced it will move its COVID-19 Assessment Centre to 22 Prospect Street in Newmarket from its previous location at the Newmarket Seniors' Meeting Place on Davis Drive effective October 29.

“Appointments booked for or after October 29 will take place at the new location,” says Southlake. “All appointments scheduled for dates prior to October 29 will take place at the Seniors' Meeting Place. Southlake and the Town of Newmarket worked together to identify the Seniors' Meeting Place as the best temporary location for the Assessment Centre in October 2020. The Seniors' Meeting Place has been closed as a result of the pandemic since March 2020 and the Town of Newmarket is working to reopen the Seniors' Meeting Place for programming by mid-November.

“The Assessment Centre will continue to operate in the new location at 22 Prospect Street from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week. All patients must schedule an appointment, which can be booked [online](#). The centre will not accept drop ins. Patients are advised to arrive at their scheduled appointment time. Limited free parking is available and there is additional paid parking in the hospital's parking garage across the street.”

LOCAL STATS

As of Tuesday, October 19, Aurora has seen a total of 2,049 cases of COVID-19 since the start of the global pandemic. 1,994 cases are now marked as recovered and there have been 48 fatalities.

Of the 7 active cases, 6 are attributed to local transmission, close contact or unknown exposure, while 1 is linked to travel.

Between October 11 to 18, 54.9 per cent of cases have been among the unvaccinated eligible population aged 12 and up.

Aurora's vaccination rate at the start of the week stood at 89.6 per cent of residents with at least one dose, while 86.6 per cent of residents are fully vaccinated.

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