

April 11, 2022

Ottawa Public Health has been and continues to monitor the local COVID-19 situation very closely. Monitoring indicators have been trending upwards over the past few weeks and this concerning trend has been communicated to the office of Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

On April 7, 2022, Dr. Vera Etches, Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health, along with other Eastern Ontario Medical Officers of Health and the Champlain region's hospital Chiefs of Staff issued a [joint special statement](#) noting that the COVID-19 wastewater signal in Ottawa was at record levels. In that special statement, the doctors highly recommended the following four things people can do right now to protect themselves, their families, and our communities, with the goal of reducing severe illness and hospitalization:

- Get vaccinated with all doses they are eligible for
- Limit their close contacts as much as possible
- Wear a mask in indoor public spaces
- Stay home when sick

As restrictions were lifted earlier this spring, we anticipated seeing an increase of COVID-19 transmission in our community. However, as noted in the April 7 special statement, right now the level of community transmission is very high.

As the province of Ontario lifts many of the pandemic-related mandates, we all need to be prepared to adjust our behaviours to the actual level of COVID-19 in the community. Given the current high levels of COVID-19 in the community, OPH is strongly recommending that people wear masks in indoor settings, particularly in situations where physical distancing may be difficult or impossible. OPH is also supportive of measures that can be taken to increase mask use during this resurgence, including policies in specific businesses, workplaces and community settings, including schools and childcare. Moreover, in the context of high absenteeism, schools/school boards and post-secondary education institutions may wish to consider introducing temporary masking policies to provide a safer environment to support in-class learning.

Other measures in addition to masking and physical distancing should also be considered as each one provides an added layer of protection:

- Promoting / encouraging vaccination
- Supporting and practising good hand hygiene
- Maintaining regular cleaning schedules
- Limiting the number of non-household contacts where possible
- Improving ventilation by opening windows or gathering outdoors, if possible
- Monitoring / screening for symptoms
- Staying home when sick

Thank you for doing what you can to help keep yourself and those around you safe during this time of uncertainty amid the rising levels of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Ottawa Public Health