

people need to downplay their expectations."

Stranges said he is concerned people may let their "pandemic fatigue" take over, and that citizens should be cautious to not think of the holidays as business as usual.

## What's the worst that could happen?

Colin Furness, infection control epidemiologist at University of Toronto, said if Ontarians choose to ignore public health guidelines over the holidays, "January, February and March are going to be abysmal."

He said while he hopes his forecast is wrong, he fears that there will be a significant number of residents across the province who forgo restrictions and have get-togethers with friends and family.

"There will be enough people who do that to overwhelm hospitals," he continued.

Martha Fulford, an infectious disease specialist at Hamilton Health Sciences and associate professor at McMaster University, agreed that overwhelming the health-care system would be the worst-case scenario come January.

"If we end up too full, that means we can't do surgeries, we can't do the elective procedures, we are stretched if somebody has a trauma or somebody requires and ICU bed," she said, adding that hospital capacity and ICU numbers are slowly increasing.

"If people can just do their best to follow all the recommendations until we've vaccinated the vulnerable, then essentially we've accomplished the mission of preserving our health-care system."

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## When would we start to see a spike?

At some point in January, residents can expect to see a spike in cases or any repercussions of people not complying with restrictions over the holidays.