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News

Ontario To Require Proof Of Vaccination For Youth To Participate In Sports And Will No Longer Accept Doctors Notes For Medical Exemptions



By **Pamela Vanmeer** December 10, 2021



KAWARTHA LAKES-The Ontario government announced new COVID-19 measures this afternoon including targeting children's sports.

"As we continue to learn more about the Omicron variant, we are taking additional measures to protect our progress as we head into the winter months," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Getting vaccinated and adhering to public health and workplace safety measures will continue to protect us and our loved ones against COVID and variants, but we won't hesitate to continue to take swift action to ensure the continued health and safety of all Ontarians."

Today in Ontario there are 718 new cases of COVID in the fully vaccinated and 613 in the unvaccinated.

Ontario's weekly cases incidence rate is below the national average, and recent investments combined with high vaccination rates have meant hospital and intensive care unit capacity remains stable according to the government.

The province is adjusting its COVID-19 response that will strengthen the province's proof of vaccination requirements and enhance public health measures. This includes the **following measures**:

- Delaying the **lifting of proof of vaccination requirements** beyond January 17, 2022, aligned with the reopening plan that stipulated that doing so was contingent on the absence of concerning trends.
- Effective January 4, 2022, requiring the use of the enhanced vaccine certificate with QR code and the Verify Ontario app in settings where proof of vaccination is required. The QR code can be used digitally or by printing a paper copy. Individuals can download their enhanced certificate with QR code by visiting <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/book-vaccine/>.
- Strengthening the verification process for medical exemptions and clinical trial exemptions by requiring a certificate with a QR code. Organizations and businesses that are under the provincial proof-of-vaccination system will be advised to no longer accept physician notes as of January 10, 2022.
- Effective December 20, 2021, requiring proof of vaccination for youth aged 12 to 17 years participating in organized sports at recreational facilities.
- On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontarians are strongly advised by the government to limit their social gatherings and the number of gatherings they attend over the holiday season. Additional precautions should be taken if all individuals are not fully vaccinated or where vaccination status is unknown. Employers in all industries should make every effort to allow employees to work from home.

The full suite of measures is outlined in the **backgrounder**.

To continue providing an additional layer of protection against COVID-19 and variants, as part of its **enhanced winter testing strategy** the province is launching a holiday testing blitz next week to offer voluntary rapid antigen screening to asymptomatic individuals free of charge. Two million rapid tests will be provided at pop-up testing sites in high-traffic settings such as malls, retail settings, holiday markets and transit hubs

Starting on Monday, December 13, 2021 at 8:00 a.m., individuals aged 50 and over will be eligible to schedule their booster dose appointment. This will expand booster eligibility to approximately 5.5 million people. Expanded booster dose eligibility to all Ontarians 18 years of age and older will occur on January 4, 2022, with appointments to be booked approximately six months after receiving a second dose.

“Ontario, like other jurisdictions around the world, is seeing concerning trends in public health and health care indicators, and additional measures are required to protect our progress for the long-term,” said Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health. “All Ontarians are strongly urged to follow these and existing measures and get vaccinated with a first, second or booster dose if you have not done so already. These are the layers that are protecting everyone. By taking these actions, we can help to reduce the mobility of COVID-19 and its variants, protect public health and health system capacity and save lives. This is especially important as we enter the holiday season and spend more time with family and friends. We need to keep each other safe.”