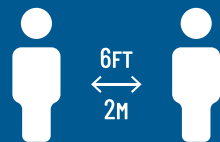


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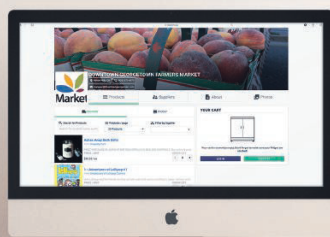


**PLEASE  
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## NEWS

# CONTINUED VIGILANCE VITAL, SAYS LOCAL PHYSICIAN

Continued from page 3

work" of residents for maintaining social distancing, following hand hygiene and wearing masks and face coverings.

"It all makes a difference, it all adds up. All those small individual actions add up to produce what we're seeing in Halton overall, which are low counts," she said.

With the reopening of schools, there is concern that it may lead to a surge in the numbers.

"We've seen in other jurisdictions that as schools reopened, the numbers do increase, and the degree to which those increases happen really has to do with community transmission," she noted.

Halton Region Public Health has been working with school boards and schools to support the back-to-school plan and preparation.

Dr. Hamidah Meghani, the region's medical officer of health, shared in a video update that they're confident that their collective efforts will provide safe and productive learning environments for students and staff.

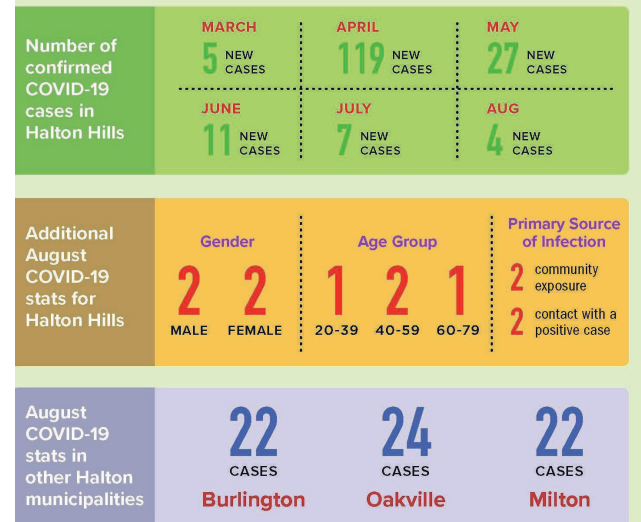
"For our part, we provide guidance, in line with the provincial plan, around implementing appropriate infection prevention and control measures," she said.

The measures include active daily screening, no mixing of cohorts in elementary schools, having older children wear face coverings, enhanced hand hygiene and cleaning and providing staff with PPE.

The health department also offers additional resources for parents, including mental health resources, on its website at [halton.ca/covid19](http://halton.ca/covid19).

As for the expected second wave in the fall, Alam

## COVID-19 stats for Halton Hills in August



Source: Halton Region COVID-19 Dashboard/Reported Date Aug. 1 - Aug. 31

Torstar graphic

says it's difficult to gauge what it's going to look like.

"We won't know until we're in it," she added.

There's a possibility that it can be more severe in terms of numbers when looking at what's happening in other parts of the world, she says.

Compounding the concern is how the second wave will coincide with the cold and flu season.

"We're all worried because we don't know what this coming season is going to look like. We're worried about our local resources being able to match patients' needs," she said. "We're watching very carefully."

The way to control the infection and keep it at a slow burn - so that it won't overwhelm the health-care system - is to maintain and incorporate social distancing, masks and strict hand hygiene into people's regular lives, according to Alam. These are the same measures that have been working in helping drive the rates of infection down.

Alam also urges every-

one to get more familiar with the symptom list of COVID-19, and stay home and not go to work or send their children to school if they or their kids have any of the symptoms.

"Get tested and get advice on what you should be doing," she said, adding that it's also important to download the COVID-19 alert app for the purpose of contact tracing.

She said that these are difficult times, not just for the government but for decision-makers everywhere, whether at school boards or in the hospital or as a parent at home.

"Expect to be tired, expect that you'll get irritable and frustrated," she said. "But it's important to stay calm and to be kind."

**STORY BEHIND THE STORY:** Adherence to health and social distancing guidelines helped drive local COVID-19 cases down, but more perseverance is required to minimize the spread of infection during an expected second wave.