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NEWS

ONTARIO ELIMINATING FIVE-DAY COVID-19 ISOLATION PERIOD

HERB GARBUTT
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Herb Garbutt/Screenshot

Ontario is eliminating the mandatory five-day isolation period for anyone testing positive for COVID-19.

Instead, the province will now require that anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 isolate themselves for 24 hours from the time symptoms begin improving, or they no longer have a fever, and then wear a mask for 10 days from the start of symptoms.

Asked why the changes were being made as school is restarting, Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, said the goal is to limit disruptions in classrooms.

"We want to maintain a safe, learning environment. Students deserve a safe, healthy school year," he said. "We have been cautious and taken our time to put this in place. Many other provinces already have this in place, but we wanted to get further along in the seventh wave."

He said Ontario residents are much better protected heading into this school year because of the high vaccination rates, natural immunity, improved air filtration in schools and the availability of COVID-19 treatments such as Paxlovid.

Dr. Moore also announced the province will be making booster doses available to children between the ages of five and 11 beginning tomorrow.

While he said masks will not be mandatory, any school staff or students will still have the option to wear masks and the

Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's chief medical officer of health, announced the province will no longer require residents to quarantine for five days following a positive COVID-19 test.

province will continue to make them available.

"I hope everyone will respect a student's or teacher's decision to wear a mask," he said.

Dr. Moore did say that vaccinations continue to provide strong protection against severe outcomes associated with COVID-19, noting that the risk of death or hospitalization is four times greater for someone who is not vaccinated. He also encouraged Ontario residents to get flu shots.

Dr. Moore said the only way the province would return to mandatory masking would be if a new strain of the virus began putting pressure on the health care system.

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