



I'm worried about the new variant. How do I keep safe during Omicron?



Most COVID cases in Ontario are now caused by the new COVID variant. Our understanding of Omicron has changed every day since it landed and spread across our communities.

This is what we know about Omicron, as of early January 2022:

- » Omicron spreads much more easily than earlier strains of COVID.
- » Two doses of a vaccine are less effective — but still helpful — in preventing people from getting sick with Omicron and spreading it.
- » Two or more doses of a vaccine protect people from serious illness, hospitalization and death due to COVID.

Because the Omicron variant is so contagious, many people will become infected.

The good news is that most people with 2 or more doses of a COVID vaccine and healthy immune systems will experience only mild symptoms if they are infected by Omicron.

Some people can still get seriously sick and even die from Omicron, especially older people and those with serious health problems. We can reduce the impact of Omicron by protecting those vulnerable people. Taking steps to slow the spread of infection will help ensure that hospitals and other essential services are not overwhelmed by everyone getting sick at the same time.

Please protect yourself and those around you. Make sure you and your loved ones get all the vaccines available to you — whether your 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th dose.



Three doses of a COVID vaccine better protects you from getting and spreading the Omicron variant than two doses.

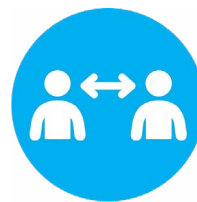
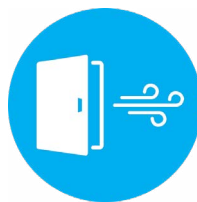
Everyone 18 years of age and older can get a third dose 3 months after their second dose. **Getting a 3rd dose is important for all adults.** It is especially important if you are:

- ✓ Over 70
- ✓ At risk because of a very weak immune system
- ✓ Pregnant
- ✓ A recipients of two doses of the AstraZeneca or Covishield vaccines

People with a very weak immune systems are now eligible for a **4th COVID vaccine** 3 months after their 3rd dose. This includes people who:

- ✓ Receive dialysis
- ✓ Currently receive cancer treatments
- ✓ Previously had organ or stem-cell transplants
- ✓ Have a rare genetic disorder like DiGeorge Syndrome that impairs their immune system
- ✓ Have advanced or untreated HIV
- ✓ Take medications that weaken the immune system, including antimetabolites like methotrexate, biologic drugs that often end in 'mab', 'mib', or 'nib', and high-dose steroids (Prednisone 20mg or higher)

You can protect yourself and your loved ones in other ways.



Keep following public health advice:

- » Self-isolate if you have any symptoms (see rebrand.ly/Feeling-Unwell)
- » Avoid gathering indoors with people who don't live with you
- » Gather outdoors when possible and reduce gathering in general
- » Always wear a well-fitted mask when you are inside with people who don't live with you
- » If possible, get the air flowing when you are inside: open windows and doors and improve your air filtration if you can
- » Stay two metres apart from other people, even when masked
- » Wash your hands often