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NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Lambton County COVID-19 Update: Omicron Variant Confirmed

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Point Edward, ON – Lambton Public Health (LPH) is advising residents that the Omicron variant is circulating rapidly in Lambton County, and the number of confirmed cases underestimates the true number of residents with COVID-19.

Following the identification of the Omicron variant in Ontario in November 2021, it has quickly become [the dominant strain of COVID-19 in the province](#). The Omicron variant is [more transmissible](#) than previous variants and we are seeing a significant increase in case numbers locally and provincially. The first lab-confirmed case of Omicron was reported to LPH on January 4, and the weekly COVID-19 incidence rate in Lambton County has increased by 80 percent over the last seven days.

“Given the significant increase in cases, we can confidently say that Omicron is circulating at an exponential rate in Lambton County,” said Dr. Sudit Ranade, Medical Officer of Health for the County of Lambton. “At this point, our best strategy is to protect those who are most vulnerable from the effects of COVID-19. Individuals over the age of 70 or who have underlying medical conditions including the immunocompromised are the people we need to protect the most right now. This includes ensuring they have received their third (booster) dose, limiting their social contacts, ensuring they have groceries and caregivers who can check in to make sure they have what they need.”

Clinic Capacity

In order to provide an extra layer of protection to the region’s most vulnerable, LPH worked to double its vaccination capacity from approximately 3,000 doses a week in early December to 7,000 a week in early January via clinics and mobile delivery. Primary care and pharmacies have also increased their capacity and are on track to deliver another 4,000 doses weekly. Residents aged 70 and older are encouraged to call LPH’s Vaccine Call Centre to inquire about available appointments. Regular updates will also be provided via LPH’s social media channels and GetTheVaccine.ca.

“LPH staff continue to work tirelessly to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 locally,” said Dr. Ranade. “In the last 2 weeks, with case counts growing steadily, public health staff have implemented changes in case and contact management and more than doubled local vaccine delivery capacity together with their partners.”

For those under 70 years of age, being fully vaccinated with two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine is still your best defense against severe disease/illness as a result of contracting the virus. Booster dose appointments are added to local clinics frequently, so all eligible residents are encouraged to check LPH’s website regularly for openings. Walk-ins are still accepted at all public health clinic locations for first and second doses to individuals 12 years of age and older.

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Third/Booster Shots

To date, approximately 30,376 third doses have been administered. Thousands of appointments have been added throughout January and February in order to keep up with demand, but the number of eligible people (approx. 108,590 individuals aged 18+) means those appointments book up very quickly. LPH thanks the residents of Lambton County for their patience as capacity at our clinics is ramped up to manage this surge. The health unit also recommends people check with their primary care provider or local pharmacies as they may be able to get an earlier booking in that setting.

Remember, the new minimum interval between the second and third/booster dose for most individuals aged 18+ is now 84 days or three months (unless there's a specific medical condition).

GO VAXX Bus

The provincial GO VAXX Bus is returning to the Petrolia Farmers' Market on Monday, January 10 from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. **Appointments are required for ALL vaccinations and must be scheduled via the provincial booking system which will not open for registration until Sunday, January 9 at 8:00 a.m.** For further details or to book an appointment go to <https://www.ontario.ca/page/go-vaxx-bus-schedule>.

For the latest updates on Lambton County's COVID-19 Immunization Rollout or to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment please visit [GetTheVaccine.ca](https://www.getthevaccine.ca). LPH's Vaccine Call Centre is also available to assist from Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 226-254-8222.

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Please contact:

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