



COVID-19 COMMUNITY UPDATE

December 3, 2021

OMICRON VARIANT

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated a new variant of concern last November 26, 2021. The variant comes from the lineage B.1.1.529 of the COVID-19 virus and is now called the OMICRON variant. As of December 3rd, six cases of Omicron variant had been detected in Ontario. As more lab testing takes place, ten cases of the OMICRON variant have now been verified across Canada in Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta, and Quebec and that number is expected to rise.

OMICRON carries the highest number of novel mutations compared to other COVID-19 variants. The significance of these mutations is not yet clear. The WHO does not yet know if OMICRON will be more transmissible from person to person or if it will cause more severe disease than the other variants of concern. So far, the main difference with other variants is an increased risk of reinfection with Omicron -- in other words, that people who've already had COVID-19 could get re-infected more easily. The variant appears to have a high number of mutations -- about 30 -- in the coronavirus' spike protein, which could affect how easily it spreads to people. As an example, in Norway 50 people were infected with Omicron as a result of attending the same office party event.

Epidemiologists are indicating that it's too early to tell what course this variant will take. For now, it is suggested we continue with the precautions already in place which include: Social Distancing, Screening, masking, using hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol based) and the continuance of vaccinations. The presumption is that the vaccinations currently being administered in Canada will provide protection against the new variant or at least a degree of protection. **It will be a few weeks before labs around the world will be able to report updates on the progress of OMICRON.**

DELTA VARIANT

The Delta Variant continues to be the dominant strain across Canada. As of December 3, 2021 there are 47 active cases of the Delta Variant across Lambton County. The Delta Variant is more transmissible than the original virus and is still an active variant that poses high-risk to the Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

Although the Kettle and Stony Point Health Services currently report no active cases from our testing site, we have received notification there were a few positive cases of COVID-19 of community members who were tested at other sites. With that, we'd encourage anyone who had attended any small or large community gathering / party / celebrations over the past 10-day period to make an appointment to get your COVID-test if you are not feeling well – including mild cold symptoms – and if you came into contact with anyone outside of your family household.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- fever (a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher) and/or chills
- cough, including a barking cough or croup (continuous, more than usual, making a whistling noise when breathing)
- shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- decrease or loss of taste or smell
- for children under 18 years of age: nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- for adults over 18 years of age: muscle aches, joint pain and/or extreme tiredness

Please be safe everyone!

Call the Kettle and Stony Point Health Services to book your COVID-19 test if you are not feeling well.

519-786-5647