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Durham Family Resources

January 2022

FAMILYfocus

SO THAT ALL PEOPLE ENJOY A FULL AND MEANINGFUL LIFE
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

The New Year Brings a New Learning Series for Anyone who Identifies as the Next Generation

Durham Family Resources' Next Generation Group is excited to bring to families a unique learning series with a specific focus for those who would identify as the 'next in line' in the support of a loved one with a disability as parents age. This demographic is not limited to sisters/brothers but also to other family members such as aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, and trustees to name some others.

A six-part learning series has been developed with the support of a Capacity-Building Grant through the provincial government. These sessions will seek to address questions and concerns raised over the past three years through the monthly Next Generation Meetups.

This learning series will be held virtually via Zoom and will begin on Thursday, January 20th with Digging Deep: Managing Competing Priorities from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. This first session will be facilitated by Registered Social Workers/ Psychotherapists, Heather Ratych, MSW, RSW, C-Hyp., PMH-C and Nasreen Subdar, MSW, RSW.

In this session, Heather and Nasreen will include: how one finds the right fit when seeking a therapist, guidance and insight in identifying the real issues that the next generation face when parents age and are no longer able to maintain the same level of supportive role in their adult children's lives, and ways to address the complexities of competing demands.



Nasreen is a Registered Social Worker/Psychotherapist with 30 years of clinical experience. Nasreen's deep respect for diversity and her culturally sensitive practice, leading to ethical and skillful collaborative work with clients. She truly believes that with every challenge and hardship, comes ease and opportunity, and works with her clients to build capacity and increase knowledge, so that they can look positively toward the future.



Heather is Registered Social Worker/Psychotherapist working with individuals with a wide range of presenting issues and concerns since 2005. She is passionate about supporting individuals through role adjustments and significant life changes and recognizes that many are experiencing this without support. Heather is passionate about helping people to think creatively about the future, so that they can feel confident, connected and grounded.

Thursday, January 20th at 6:30pm
Register Here for Your Zoom Link!



COVID-19 Information

Why Get a Booster Shot?

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Cases of COVID-19 are increasing both globally as well as here in Ontario¹. With the rise of the Omicron variant, we need to be diligent to protect ourselves, our family members, and the community around us. Getting a third dose (or first or second for that matter) is one of the most proactive measures for staying safe this winter.

As with many vaccines, over time there is a decrease in antibody levels and effectiveness against infection. A booster shot increases the levels of immune response, increasing the quantity and quality of antibodies that are produced², protecting against infection, transmission, symptoms, and risk of hospitalization or death. As of December 20th, 2021, all Ontarians 18 years of age or older are eligible for a third dose.

[See: Frequently Asked Questions about boosters.](#)

[Homebound adults in Durham Region can access vaccinations through a mobile clinic.](#)

PFIZER-BIONTECH BOOSTER SHOTS AGAINST OMICRON

Based on preliminary data...

A booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine **increases** antibody protection **25-folds** compared to the initial two-doses

2 doses of vaccine show **significantly reduced** ability of antibodies to target and neutralize omicron variant

3rd dose of Pfizer and BioNTech's vaccine can provide a **high level of protection** against omicron variant

Blood samples were taken 1 month after booster shot show levels of Omicron-neutralizing antibodies **similar** to amounts proven protective against earlier variants after 2 doses

Source: <https://www.cbc.com/2021/12/08/pfizer-biontech-say-booster-dose-provides-high-level-of-protection-against-omicron-variant.html>

COVID-19 MADE SIMPLE

www.covid19madesimple.ca
@covid19madesimple

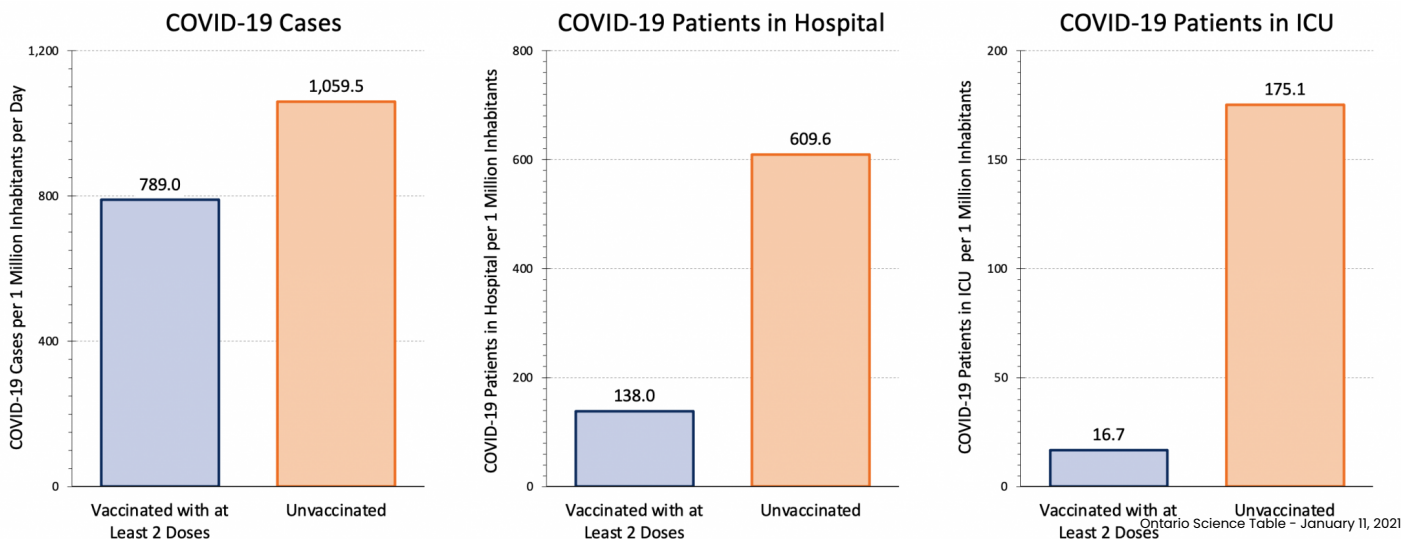
Vaccines Work!

Even though vaccinated people are testing positive with Omicron, having two or more doses means you are 4.5 times less likely to need to be hospitalized, and over 11 times less likely to need the ICU (see bar charts with data from Ontario below).

We know that Omicron is presenting differently than previous variants – and although it *can* be milder to some, it can also be very severe for others³. Because it is infecting so many more people, and because many of those people still need some amount of hospital care, there is still concern of overwhelming our hospital systems⁴.

[Read: Omicron has created a whole new booster logic.](#)

Current COVID-19 Risk in Ontario by Vaccination Status



1 [Ontario Dashboard - Ontario Science Table](#)

2 [Understanding the science behind a vaccine booster - The Harvard Gazette](#)

3 ["Omicron is not mild... that narrative that is out there is dangerous" - Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove](#)

4 [How Omicron affects hospital patients - National Post](#)



Masking and Omicron - what's new?

We have known for some time now that wearing a mask is one layer of defense against contracting and/or spreading COVID-19. While we have previously relied on clean, well fitted cloth masks, or disposable medical masks – the emergence of highly transmissible Omicron means it may be time to think about an upgrade.

While scientists are still determining all of the reasons why Omicron is more transmissible and infectious than previous variants, a recent preliminary study proposes that it is more efficient at infecting cells in the upper respiratory tract – which includes your throat and nasal passages¹. Lots of virus in the upper respiratory tract means we want to be extra cautious as to what can exit and enter our own mouths and noses while we are around others!

Experts are now recommending you pay particular attention to the fit and filter level of your masks. High filtration masks are the goal for protecting against infection – so it's time to look to N95, KN95, and KF94 respirators – which are made with material that contain an electrostatic charge, actually pulling particles in to prevent them from being inhaled². Surgical masks can still be helpful, but it is recommended to wear a cloth mask on top of the surgical mask to ensure a tighter fit³.

[Watch: Pro Tip to Help Your Earloop Mask Fit More Tightly](#)

[See: Performing a Seal Check When Donning an N95 Mask](#)

High filtration respirators, such as N95 masks will often provide storage and usage tips – this way you can get the most use out of these in-demand masks. It is often recommended to store these masks in a clean, dry environment when not in use. They may have a recommended disposal time listed – though experts agree that, as long as the mask is in good shape, they have a life of around 40 hours⁴.

[Read: It's time to switch to an N95 mask in the battle against Omicron](#)

Be aware that there are many counterfeit N95 and KN95 masks on the market right now – watch for spelling mistakes, sellers making claims of having unlimited stock during global shortages, and very low prices⁵.

[Read: How to find N95 masks: where to look, what to avoid, tips for wearing them](#)

¹ [The SARS-CoV-2 variant, Omicron, shows rapid replication in human primary nasal epithelial cultures and efficiently uses the endosomal route of entry - Tom Peacock et al, bioRxiv](#)

² [With omicron, you need a masks that means business, NPR](#)

³ [Face mask fit modifications that improve source control performance, American Journal of Infection Control](#)

⁴ [It's time to switch to an N95 mask in the battle against Omicron, Macleans](#)

⁵ [Counterfeit, Sub-standard and Non-equivalent N95 Respirators, Canadian Dental Association](#)

LAYERING RISK PREVENTION

WE KNOW MASKS HAVE SOME ABILITY TO REDUCE VIRAL TRANSMISSION BUT ARE NOT MEANT TO BE THE ONLY RISK REDUCTION MEASURE AND CANNOT BE EXPECTED TO ELIMINATE INFECTION RISK ENTIRELY. SIMILARLY, WE KNOW SEATBELTS REDUCE RISK OF INJURY IN CAR ACCIDENTS EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT 100% EFFECTIVE. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES SHOULD BE LAYERED, OR ADDED TOGETHER, TO BECOME AS PROTECTED AS POSSIBLE!



See: How do masks work?

@sciencewithanni X @dr.risahoshino



COVID-19 Information

Using Rapid Tests Effectively

Cases of fast-spreading Omicron continue to rise across Ontario, and along with it the demand and need for accurate testing. With recent changes limiting who can access PCR tests in Ontario¹, and a dwindling supply and efficacy limitations of rapid antigen tests², there is understandable confusion on how to proceed in this current wave.

While at-home rapid tests have proven to be a powerful tool in our defense against COVID-19, we have to consider them in the right context. They have always been less sensitive than molecular PCR tests, but with Omicron, there are even more sensitivity parameters to be aware of. These tests don't work as well in the early part of an infection with Omicron, because with this variant it takes a few more days for the virus to reach the detectable threshold for a rapid test (compared with Delta and previous variants)³.

[Watch: Rapid tests tell you if you definitely should not gather, not that you can gather 100% safely.](#)

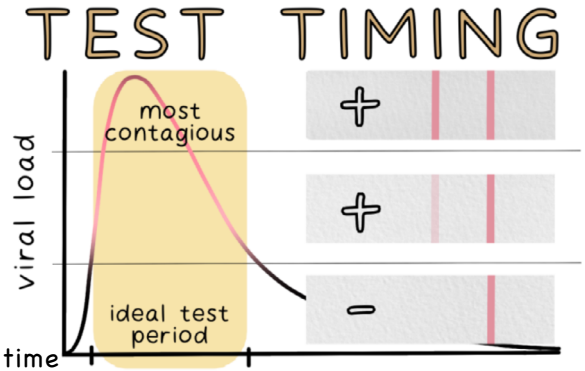
[See: Comparison between rapid and PCR tests.](#)

There is growing consensus that people should use a positive rapid test result as a "red light" and should isolate. A positive rapid test means you have enough virus to be infectious to other people because virus protein is present in large quantities in your sample.

But, the same is not true for a negative test result. People shouldn't use a negative result as a "green light" to go ahead with an activity that is potentially risky. A person's viral load can change within hours – so a person testing negative can go on to test positive a few hours later.

Considering rapid tests are in such short supply – most people aren't at liberty to test multiple times a day over several days, so what's the best way to use a limited supply?

If you are feeling any COVID-19 symptoms, you should isolate and it's a good idea to take a test if you have one.

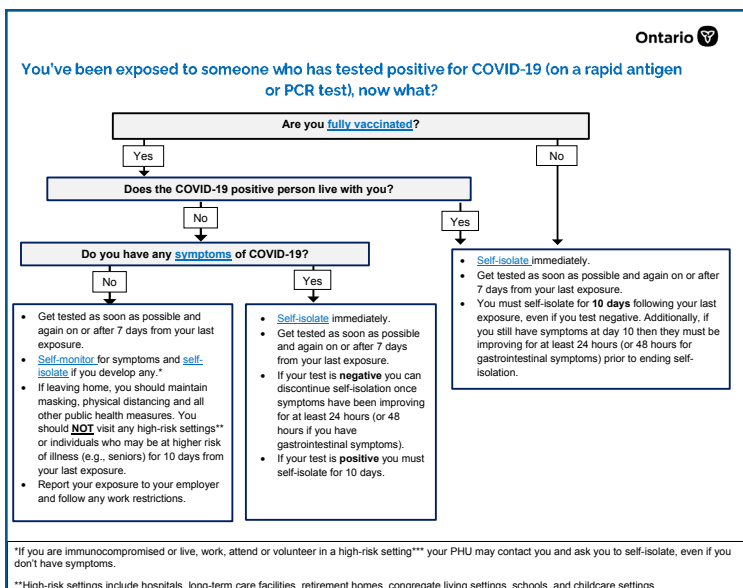


Take an antigen test right before an event to have an accurate representation of viral load & contagiousness.

If symptomatic, test, isolate, & test again 2-3 days later to ensure you have enough virus to obtain a visible line.

After a potential exposure, isolate as much as possible and test at least 3-5 days later to catch an infection.

@sciencewithanni



If you have had a potential exposure, but are not feeling any symptoms, it is best to isolate as much as possible, and wait a few days before taking the test, all the while, continuing to monitor for symptoms. This will allow enough virus to develop, if present, to show up on a rapid test. If you continue to test negative, you can be more certain that you did not contract COVID-19.

[Read: Ask Ontario's Science Table: staying safe given the fifth wave of Omicron.](#)

[See: Optimizing rapid antigen testing since we have maxed out PCR testing](#)

- 2 [Rapid antigen tests for voluntary screening – Ontario Science Table](#)
- 3 [Two key things to know about rapid antigen tests before the holidays – Samantha Yammine, PhD](#)

1 [What to do if you've been exposed to COVID-19 – Government of Ontario](#)



COVID-19 Information

Treating COVID-19 Symptoms at Home



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Information, rules, and guidance around the Omicron variant of COVID-19 are changing rapidly – what can we do to stay safe at home if we have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID?

Rapid tests are hard to come by, and [eligibility for more concrete PCR testing](#) has narrowed, so it is now recommended that if you are experiencing a symptom of COVID-19, you should assume that you have it.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 symptoms vary and may peak around 3–5 days after exposure. Omicron symptoms can be similar to other illnesses. Follow the guidelines below to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

LIST	SYMPTOMS	GUIDELINES
Symptoms prevalent with Omicron	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runny nose or nasal congestion Headache Fatigue Sore throat Muscle aches or joint pain 	If you have 2 or MORE of the listed symptoms, it is likely you have COVID-19. You must self-isolate .
Symptoms prevalent with other variants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever >37.8°C and/or chills Cough – new or worsening Trouble breathing Decrease or loss of smell or taste 	If you have 1 or MORE of the listed symptoms, it is likely you have COVID-19. You must self-isolate .

As a safety precaution, treat **any** cold or flu-like symptoms as **COVID-19** symptoms.

Source: <https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-should-do/covid-19-what-to-do-if-you-have-covid-19-symptoms/>

COVID-19 MADE SIMPLE

www.covid19madesimple.ca
[@covid19simple](https://twitter.com/covid19simple)

The symptoms include¹:

Fever and/or chills; OR
 Cough; OR
 Shortness of breath; OR
 Decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR

Two or more of:
 • runny nose/nasal congestion
 • headache
 • extreme fatigue
 • sore throat
 • muscle aches/joint pain
 • gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)

Anyone with a COVID-19 symptom, or a positive test result (PCR or rapid antigen test), needs to isolate – the isolation period for [fully vaccinated people](#) is now five days³. The five days begins the day after you first experience symptoms, or the day after you tested positive. Your symptoms should be gone or greatly improved for at least 24 hours before you end your isolation, and it is recommended you still wear a mask at all times around

other people for an additional five days². If you have been in contact with anyone else, they are required to self-monitor for ten days³.

People who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated, or immunocompromised are required to isolate for ten days.

If someone else in your house has symptoms, or has tested positive, the isolation and masking extends to everyone in the household, because if one person has COVID-19, everyone else has been exposed.

[Listen: What should you do if you think you have Omicron?](#)

Be prepared, should you or someone at home get sick or you are told you need to isolate because you have had close contact with someone who has tested positive.

Health Canada recommends having supplies at home before anyone gets sick, including:

- a thermometer,
- over-the-counter medication like ibuprofen or acetaminophen to reduce fever
- tissues, disposable paper towels, and cleaning supplies such as alcohol wipes for commonly touched surfaces
- fluids to prevent dehydration

Obtain rapid antigen tests if they are available.

Think about and make a plan, write it down if that helps:

- What would you do if one person needed to isolate in your home?
- Who could you contact if you needed someone to get supplies / walk the dog?
- Do you have the telehealth phone number to hand, or other useful contacts?

¹ COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge, Ontario Ministry of Health

² Think you may have Omicron? Here are things you can do, CBC Radio

³ Ontario Updating Public Health Measures and Guidance in Response to Omicron, Government of Ontario

Look at the [Safe at Hospital toolkit on the DFR website](#) – see if there are things you can get prepared should you or your loved one need to go into hospital.

Seniors or people with comorbidities might consider getting a pulse oximeter to monitor oxygen saturation levels or find out where you could get one if needed.

How should COVID-19 be treated at home?

If you have relatively mild symptoms, and aren't high-risk because of your age, a chronic illness, or impaired immune system, you will likely benefit from the same treatment as with any other viral illness – lots of rest and fluids, a balanced diet, and taking over-the-counter medications like ibuprofen or acetaminophen to help with aches or fever⁴.

If symptoms worsen, it is recommended to call your primary health provider, or Telehealth (1-866-797-0000 or TTY: 1-866-797-0007)⁵

Older people with comorbidities, as well as those with compromised immune systems, or other vulnerable health conditions should be in contact with their primary health care provider to let them know of symptoms and possible infection. In this way, they may be eligible and able to receive early treatment to prevent illness severity or hospitalization. Treatment options for people at greater risk might include budesonide (an inhaled steroid), dexamethasone (a steroid given in pill form) and fluvoxamine (an antidepressant with anti-inflammatory properties), and monoclonal antibodies⁶.

Seniors or people with one or more underlying health conditions might be helpful to purchase a pulse oximeter to keep an eye on oxygen saturation – a drop in normal baseline oxygen level (or dropping to 92 in an otherwise healthy person) should trigger a visit to hospital⁷.

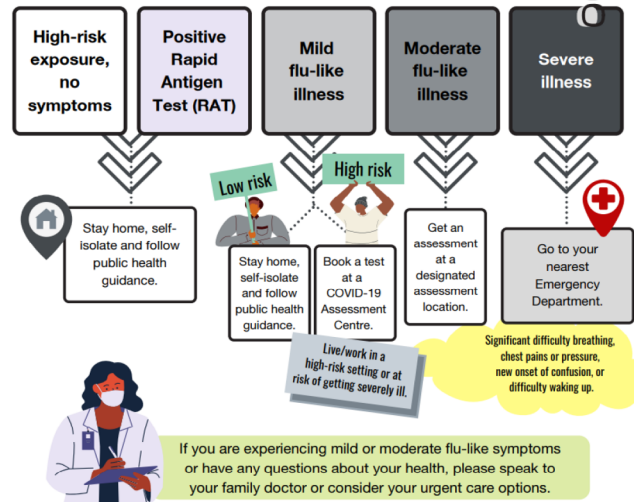
[See: How to use a pulse oximeter here.](#)

For more serious symptoms, it is recommended to seek medical care right away by visiting the nearest emergency department or calling 911. These include severe chest pains, worsening or severe shortness of breath, chest pain or pressure, new-onset confusion, dizziness, or difficulty waking up/extreme sleepiness⁷.

[Watch: COVID-19: What are the new symptoms?](#)

- 4 [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): How to manage symptoms, Government of Alberta](#)
- 5 [I am sick with COVID-19 symptoms. Now what? Durham Region Public Health](#)
- 6 [Evidence-Based Use of Therapeutics for Ambulatory Patients with COVID-19, Ontario Science Table](#)
- 7 [Got Omicron? These COVID-19 symptoms are a sign you should get to a hospital, National Post](#)

I FEEL UNWELL. WHAT DO I DO?



Go to www.lh.ca to understand your health-care options.

Experiencing mild or moderate illness?

CONSIDER THE OPTIONS BELOW BEFORE GOING TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.

- Urgent Care Centres
- Durham Virtual Urgent Care Clinic
- Urgent Care Durham (Virtual)
- Primary Care Provider
- COVID-19 Assessment Centres
- Seniors Urgency Room



Visit www.lh.ca for more information.

Are you severely ill? Go to the Emergency Department



For treatment of imminent or potential threat to life.

One System. Best Health.

Have You Attended Making the Most Family Series? Come Together to Discuss and Continue Learning!

The Making the Most Study Group is a fantastic opportunity for those who have completed the series to continue their learning and take some next steps in developing valued roles and relationships with a loved one.

Each month graduates of past Making the Most learning series are invited to come together and think more deeply about crafting and sharing a vision, designing and planning days full of contributions and possibilities, focusing on roles rather than activities, seeking and developing good support, making positive introductions, and finding strength, comfort, energy and hope through building circles of support. We continue to use the MTM Principles to guide our conversations and help figure out, one person at a time, how to take steps forward towards more of the Good Things of Life.



MAKING THE MOST STUDY GROUP

The meeting is open to anyone who has attended a MTM series before and wishes to join the conversation. Contact Laura lpowell@dafsr.com for more information.

The next meeting is Monday, January 24th from 6.30-7.30pm via Zoom. Members are sent a link to join shortly before.

JANUARY 24, 2022
6:30PM TO 7:30PM

{ respiteservices.com }

CHAP
COMMUNITY HELPERS
FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

RespiteServices.com continues connecting families to
supporters! Contact Sandy for details!

Respiteservices.com is continuing to operate remotely to connect families and support workers. We know people continue to need good support during this time and are working diligently to continue to provide this service to residents of Durham Region.

To be matched with support workers, you must be registered with respiteservices.com/durham. Contact Sandy at (905)436-3404 or sciarlariello@dafsr.com. New supporters are continuing to be added. Contact Sandy for more information!

Important Dates At-A-Glance!

Bio Medical Study Group

Feb 11@10am

Imagining Home

Feb 9@6:30pm

MTM Study Group

Jan 24 @6:30pm

For more
information on our
organization or any
of our events, please
visit our website at
www.dafsr.com

For more information, please visit our website, www.dafsr.com,
and see the "Upcoming Events" tab.

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