



Media Release

December 9, 2021

Grey Bruce Managing Case Under Investigation for Omicron Variant of COVID-19 – Importance of Vaccine and Prevention Measures

On December 9, 2021, the Grey Bruce Health Unit is managing a COVID-19 case conforming with the case definition of “Patient under Investigation for Omicron”. Our team is conducting an enhanced management of the case and high risk contacts, while we await the result from the advanced whole genome sequencing.

At this point, there is still limited evidence on this new variant. There is no clear information to suggest that the vaccine is not effective in reducing the likelihood of infection and complications from this variant. Early evidence suggests the vaccine is effective at the prevention of both infection and severe illness for those infected, and that a booster dose is a supportive way to enhance this protection.

Getting your full vaccine series and booster dose when eligible and following basic COVID-19 prevention methods is critical for the residents of Grey and Bruce to help contain this new variant.

Locally, we are reminded of the importance of the basics of COVID-19 prevention, along with vaccination. These prevention strategies include:

- **Stay at home if you are sick or unwell.**
- Getting Vaccinated with your full series, and third dose as eligible
- Screening before work, school and childcare
 - If you do not pass the screening – follow the instructions!
- Practice Physical Distancing
- Washing your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer - [Hand Hygiene](#)
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect high-touch objects and surfaces frequently
- Wear a face covering in indoor public places or when physical distancing may be difficult.
- Follow all required and recommended practices as outlined here:

A healthier future for all.

101 17th Street East, Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 0A5 www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

519-376-9420

1-800-263-3456

Fax 519-376-0605

- [COVID-19 public health measures and advice | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#)

Ontario will rapidly identify, trace and isolate COVID-19 and its variants. The province is taking several other measures in the fight against COVID-19 and its variants, including:

- Further [expanding free PCR testing](#) at all [testing centres](#) to asymptomatic individuals who have returned from, or travelled in, Nigeria, Malawi and Egypt between November 1st and December 6th, 2021
- The province is distributing 11 million rapid antigen screening tests to all public schools and participating First Nation schools for each student to take home five tests to use over the holidays and throughout the return to in-person learning in January.
- The Province will be releasing enhanced [guidance on case, contact and outbreak management](#) for individuals that may have been exposed to the Omicron variant to mitigate further transmission.

On December 2, 2021, the province announced via a media announcement "[Ontario Accelerating Booster Eligibility to Adults Aged 50+ | Ontario Newsroom](#)" of details regarding enhanced vaccine eligibility and new public health measures. These measures have been developed to counter the potential risk related to this new variant.

On Monday, December 13, 2021 at 8 am, individuals aged 50 years and over will be eligible to book their third dose appointment. Appointments can be made through the [COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre. Appointments may also be made through [select pharmacies](#) and primary care settings. Appointments will be booked for approximately six months (168 days) after a second dose.

Beginning in January, Ontario will further expand eligibility for booster doses based on age and risk, with an interval of six to eight months from the second dose.

This announcement does NOT change eligibility criteria for any other group currently eligible. For details, please visit:

- Provincial media announcement
- [Third Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](#)

For information about COVID-19 and Variants of concern and the COVID-19 Vaccine please visit:

- [2019 Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](#)
- [Classification of Omicron \(B.1.1.529\): SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern \(who.int\)](#)
- [Government of Canada introduces new measures to address COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern - Canada.ca](#)

For More Information:

Dr. Ian Arra, MD MSc FRCPC ACPM ABPM

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

To arrange to speak with Dr. Arra, please contact:
communications@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca
519-376-9420 or 1-800-263-3456 ext. 3940