

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: Nov. 18, 2021

COVID-19 Vaccines Help Prevent Severe Illness

NIPISSING & PARRY SOUND, ON - COVID-19 vaccines are working. Public Health Ontario (2021a) data shows COVID-19 “vaccine effectiveness for preventing severe disease, and COVID-19 related hospitalizations and deaths ranges from 70 to 90 per cent three to four weeks after the first dose.” Locally, since June 1, 2021, less than 4 per cent of fully immunized individuals who contracted COVID-19 were hospitalized and less than 1 per cent were in ICU. Since the start of November 2021, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit has declared two COVID-19 outbreaks, both in locations where individuals are at a greater risk of a negative outcome from contracting COVID-19.

“Although the outbreaks are not over, we can say at this time there have been no severe illness among individuals who tested positive for COVID-19,” explains Dr. Jim Chirico, Medical Officer of Health. “I largely attribute the mild symptoms of COVID-19 to vaccinations. I am not certain that if we had a similar outbreak last year that the outcome would have been as favourable. Our staff continue with case and contact management to ensure that people are doing well and continue to monitor symptoms.”

Public Health Ontario (2021b) indicates older adults are more at risk given a natural waning immunity and a slight difference in vaccine effectiveness compared to younger age groups.

“It is important that people who are eligible for their third dose be vaccinated,” explains Andrea McLellan, Director of COVID-19 Immunization Strategy. “Individuals 70 years of age or older and anyone else who is eligible may see a decrease in vaccine effectiveness over time. By getting your third dose, you help to boost your immunity and better protect yourself from a COVID-19 infection.

Individuals 70 and older must wait at least 168 days since their last dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to be eligible for their third dose. The Health Unit has opened COVID-19 vaccine clinics into December and eligible individuals are encouraged to book into them at Ontario.ca/BookVaccine or by calling the Health Unit at [1-844-478-1400](tel:1-844-478-1400).

COVID-19 outbreak updates can be found on the Health Unit’s COVID-19 Status Report, Monday to Friday at 3 p.m. at myhealthunit.ca/COVID-19.

Reference:

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). (2021a). *COVID-19 real-world vaccine effectiveness – what we know so far*. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). (2021b). *COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness over time – what we know so far*. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario.

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