

Toronto, Ottawa and Peel move to modified stage 2

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the Public Health Measures Table, and local medical officers of health and other health experts, the Ontario government is introducing additional targeted public health measures in the Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto public health unit regions. These modified Stage 2 restrictions will be for a minimum of 28 days and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Details were provided by Premier Doug Ford, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, Rod Phillips, Minister of Finance, Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Dr. Adalsteinn Brown, Director of the Institute for Health Policy, Management, and Evaluation and the Dalla Lana Chair of Public Health Policy at the University of Toronto. The health experts presented the most recent health data which identified some alarming public health trends that require immediate attention and early action to keep people safe, said Premier Ford. That's why we are making the difficult, but necessary decision to accept the health advice, and impose further restrictions in Toronto, Ottawa and Peel Region. By taking action ahead of the long weekend, we will help contain the spread in these hotspots, protect the surrounding communities, shield our seniors and most vulnerable, and contain the second wave surge. At the same time, we are providing support to our small businesses in these hotspots. We are seeing the percentage of people testing positive for COVID-19 rising, hospitalization rates are growing, and community outbreaks are entering our nursing homes and vulnerable congregate settings, said Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Williams. We need to act quickly, and we need everyone to follow the public health guidelines if we are going to stop the spread and contain the second wave. Effective Saturday, Oct. 10 at 12:01 a.m., these targeted measures are being implemented in Ottawa, Peel, and Toronto as a result of their higher than average rates of transmission. Measures under a modified Stage 2 include: Reducing limits for all social gatherings and organized public events to a maximum of 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained. The two limits may not be combined for an indoor-outdoor event. Prohibiting indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, including nightclubs and food court areas in malls. Closing of indoor gyms and fitness centres (i.e., exercise classes and weight and exercise rooms). Casinos, bingo halls and other gaming establishments. Indoor cinemas, performing arts centres and venues and spectator areas in racing venues. Interactive exhibits or exhibits with high risk of personal contact in museums, galleries, zoos, science centres, landmarks, etc.. Real estate open houses to 10 people indoors, where physical distancing can be maintained. In-person teaching and instruction (e.g. cooking class) to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors, with exemptions for schools, child care centres, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, private career colleges, the Ontario Police College, etc. Meeting and event spaces to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. Schools, child care centres, and places of worship will remain open in these communities and must continue to follow the public health measures in place. Before-school and after-school programs will also be exempt from these new restrictions.