



Thunder Bay District Health Unit

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TBDHU.COM

November 29, 2021

Dear Parents and Caregivers of Children and Youth in School and Child Care:

Cases of COVID-19 have increased significantly over the past week in our area. A big part of this increase is due to the spread of the virus among children who are largely unvaccinated. These children are then passing COVID-19 on to other children in their school and child care, family members at home, and to others they are in close contact with outside of school and child care settings. Children are also getting COVID-19 from their family members.

I want to remind all parents and caregivers of the important role you play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. We know this virus spreads very easily and can quickly disrupt in-person learning. Redoubling your efforts in the following areas will help keep your child and family, your school and the broader community safe.

Instructions for Parents and Caregivers:

- DO NOT send your child to school, child care or any activities (ex. sports) if they have any symptoms of illness. This applies to fully vaccinated children and youth too.
- Screen your child every day using the Ontario school/child care assessment tool at: covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/ and follow the instructions provided.
 - If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19, even if mild, they must self-isolate and testing should be arranged. They must stay home and NOT go to school or child care. If anyone in the household is unvaccinated, they also must isolate until the symptomatic child's test result comes back negative.
 - If your child passes the screen, but they have non-COVID symptoms (ex. sore throat, congested nose, etc.), keep them at home until these symptoms have improved for at least 24 hours.
 - Individuals who are active cases or close contacts of COVID-19 must follow the instructions of public health regarding symptoms and testing.
- Reduce the number of contacts your child has outside of school or child care, especially informal gatherings where public health measures (ex. screening, masking, physical distancing, etc.) may not be in place. Social events like family get-togethers, birthday parties, play dates, and activities with other families are spreading the virus. When a child passes it on to other children, more schools and child care settings are impacted. No one (children, youth or adult) should attend a gathering or activity if they have any symptoms. Be extra cautious if anyone in these settings (including your child) is not fully vaccinated.

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I strongly encourage everyone who is eligible, to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Individuals who are fully vaccinated are less likely to get the virus if they are exposed and less likely to pass it on to others. Vaccination is literally the number one thing you can do to keep your child safe from COVID-19 wherever they are and whatever they are doing.

TBDHU continues to actively work with school boards and child care to ensure all appropriate measures are in place to reduce the risk and to respond to the rise in cases of COVID-19. This includes strengthening and enhancing measures in these settings. More information will follow in the days ahead.

Thank you for your cooperation in doing your part as we continue to support children's overall safety and wellbeing through this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janet DeMille, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Thunder Bay District Health Unit

For your information, the symptoms of COVID-19 are listed below:

- Children (17 years old or younger): fever and/or chills, cough or barking cough, shortness of breath, decrease or loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea, decreased or lack of appetite (for young children and infants)
- Adults (18 years old or older): fever and/or chills, cough or barking cough, shortness of breath, decrease or loss of taste or smell, extreme tiredness, muscle aches

Note: The list of symptoms is different for individuals who are close contacts of COVID-19.

What does it mean to be "fully vaccinated"? Generally, a person is considered fully vaccinated once 14 days have passed after receiving a second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 series. For a full definition of "fully vaccinated", visit [TBDHU.com/fullyvaccinated](https://tbdhu.com/fullyvaccinated).