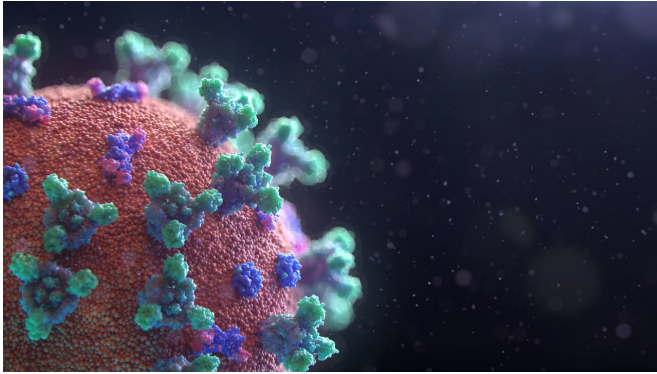


Ontario imposes provincewide restrictions amid third wave

1 April 2021, by Rob Gillies



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

The leader of Canada's most populous province announced Thursday what he calls a province wide shutdown for four weeks because of a third surge of coronavirus infections fueled by more contagious virus variants.

Ontario Premier Doug Ford said they are fighting a new pandemic with the variants and said the virus is spreading faster. The measures ban indoor public events and gatherings except for retail and [grocery stores](#). Schools will also remain open.

There will be a 25% capacity limit in retail stores and 50% in supermarkets.

Hair salons will be closed and there will be no indoor or patio dining.

"We're now fighting a new enemy. The new variants are far more dangerous than before. They spread faster and they do more harm than the virus we were fighting last year. Young people are ending up in hospital," Ford said.

Ontario is reporting more than 2,500 new cases on Thursday and record numbers in [intensive care](#)

this week.

Hot spots like Toronto have already largely been on lock down since November but patios recently opened in the city, the country's largest city. The new restrictions across the province come after months of unheeded warnings from [health experts](#).

The measures take effect Saturday and continue for at least four weeks.

Dr. Andrew Morris, a professor of infectious diseases at the University of Toronto and the medical director of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program at Sinai-University Health Network, called the Ford government "incompetent."

"Don't get me started," Morris said. He said Ontario's COVID situation "reflects a total and absolute abdication of responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our public."

"It is a tragic and unequivocal failure, fertilized by repeated rejection of scientific evidence," he said.

The announcement comes hours after the province's science advisers said stay-at-home orders are needed to control the third wave.

Vaccinations have ramped up in Canada in recent weeks and all adults who want a vaccine are expected to get at least one dose by July.

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