

On January 3, 2022, Premier Doug Ford announced that in response to recent trends that show a rapid increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations, Ontario is temporarily moving into *Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen* with modifications that take into account the province's successful vaccination efforts. This will remain in effect for at least 21 days, subject to trends in public health and health system indicators.

Unlike other variants throughout the pandemic, evolving data is showing that while the Omicron variant is less severe, its high transmissibility has resulted in a larger number of hospital admissions relative to ICU admissions. The Ministry of Health states "Staff absenteeism is also expected to rise and affect operations due to Omicron infection and exposure".

In order to preserve critical care and human resource capacity, the Chief Medical Officer of Health has reinstated Directive 2 for hospitals and regulated health professionals, instructing hospitals to pause all non-emergent and non-urgent surgeries and procedures. **Riverside will continue to provide emergent and urgent surgical care.**

If your procedure qualifies as non-urgent/non-emergent, you will be notified by Riverside staff that your scheduled appointment and/or procedure is cancelled. If you are not contacted, please present for your appointment as scheduled. Riverside recognizes the impact this news may have for our patients and families.

While the Ministry of Health released *COVID-19 Integrated Testing and Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge*, which states only 5 days of isolation are required for those that are fully vaccinated, **this does not apply** to high risk settings which include: paramedics, hospitals, long-term care, retirement homes and health care workers providing care to immunocompromised, congregate live settings. For those working in high risk settings, the isolation period remains at 10 days from last contact with a positive person.

Riverside will be implementing the following measures:

- All screening tools have been updated to include the [revised COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- **The province will be making fourth doses** of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines available based on the recommendations from the Ontario Immunization Advisory Committee, effective immediately to residents of long-term care homes, retirement homes, Elder Care Lodges and other congregate care settings if at least three months, or 84 days, have passed since their third dose.
- Long-term care: third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be mandatory for all staff, students, volunteers, caregivers and support workers by January 28, 2022 for those currently eligible for a booster.
 - Visitors will also be required to provide proof of a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine once the temporary pause on general visitors is lifted.



- Acute care: third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine will be mandatory for all staff, students, volunteers, care givers and visitors, by March 25, 2022 for those currently eligible for a booster.

Additional Resources

- A full list of alerts and information about emergencies. can be at [Ontario.ca/alert](https://ontario.ca/alert).
- You can read the Office of the Premier's News Release here: [Ontario Temporarily Moving to Modified Step Two of the Roadmap to Reopen | Ontario Newsroom](#)
- Information on Directive 2 can be found at [MOH Directive #2](#)
- The impacts of Omicron on hospital admissions can be found at [Omicron study](#)
- Visit Ontario's COVID-19 vaccine [web page](#) to view the latest provincial data and information on COVID-19 vaccines

We thank you for your continued support and commitment to protecting the health and safety of those in our care, their loved ones, our team members and the community.

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