



Media Release

July 15, 2021

Delta Variant Concern - Roadmap for Modified Step 3 in Grey Bruce

Based on our trust that the public will comply, Grey Bruce is moving to a modified Step 3, with strong recommendations instead of regulatory orders to contain the spread of COVID-19. However, that may change to orders if control over the current surge is lost. The Grey Bruce Health Unit has the authority to apply local restrictions and charge offenders. Isolation requirements for COVID-19 cases and high risk contacts remain enforceable under the Class Order signed by the Medical Officer of Health on April 16, 2021.

Grey Bruce continues to see a significant number of COVID-19 cases with 99 per cent being the Delta variant. It is noteworthy that a large number of current cases are in individuals that were not vaccinated or became infected as the result of gatherings where COVID-19 precautions were not followed. **Public Health has the authority, and will bring charges against individuals hosting private events that are not in compliance with provincial regulations.**

Due to the nature of the Delta variant, we know a high percentage of high-risk contacts will become cases. Those, as well as any further spread of the highly contagious COVID-19 variant, will result in additional hospitalizations, especially in vulnerable populations. A high number of hospitalizations may present a challenge to our hospital capacity resulting in the potential of a loved one being re-located to a hospital outside their local area as well as long waiting times for beds.

A slow and modified progression into Step 3 in Grey Bruce will reduce the risk of the current surge worsening. It will also restrain individuals who consider Step 3 an invitation to abandon precautions. Based on the public health principle of least intrusive, staying in Step 2 would deprive both businesses and the public from the additional opportunities available in Step 3. Especially as current epidemiology shows the risk of transmission remains unchanged in organized activities and regulated settings.

Vaccine is the best way to control the spread of the COVID-19 virus. While a significant number of residents in Grey Bruce have had their vaccine, **these modified Step 3 recommendations will only be revoked when the majority of youth 12-35 have had two vaccines and/or the current surge is diminished.**

A healthier future for all.

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The decision to develop this roadmap, for a modified Step 3 in Grey Bruce, was made with the approval of the office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and after consultation with hospital sector CEOs, and with the endorsement of other invested local, regional, and provincial partners.

While the Step 3 provincial reopening would relax restriction on the numbers that can gather, the Grey Bruce Health Unit strongly recommends current limits on **private gatherings** remain locally. It is recommended that an outdoor gathering can have a maximum of 25 people and 5 for indoors.

Additional recommendations for modified Step 3 in Grey Bruce include:

- The public is strongly encouraged to only dine outdoors.
- Workplaces and patrons follow public health measures, especially gyms, cinemas, and fast food locations.
- Church services and attendees, specifically wedding receptions, follow public health measures.
- Personal service settings and salons continue to require masks be worn, as in Step 2.

It is important we all continue to follow the COVID-19 prevention measures:

- Practice Physical Distancing
- Wear a face covering in indoor public places and when physical distancing may be difficult
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Stay at home if you are sick or unwell
- Clean and disinfect high-touch objects and surfaces frequently

We need everyone to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible. The sooner everyone, especially youth and young adults become vaccinated, the sooner we can return to normal. Until we reach a level of vaccination that protects the entire population, everyone must continue to be prudent in following COVID-19 precautions.

Stay safe, get the vax.

For More Information:

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