

# YORK REGION PUBLIC HEALTH 2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



# PUBLIC HEALTH IN ACTION: SIX CORE FUNCTIONS FOR A HEALTHIER POPULATION

York Region Public Health (Public Health), part of the Region's Community and Health Services Department, is the third largest of 29 local public health units in Ontario. We serve York Region's nine municipalities with programs and services to improve population health and support residents to reach their full potential.

This is done through [six core functions](#) that together form the basis of comprehensive public health practice:



## Population Health Assessment

Involves understanding the health of populations and the factors that underlie health at a point in time.



## Health Surveillance

The ongoing and systematic collection, collation and analysis of health related information for the purpose of taking public health action.



## Health Protection

Involves inspecting and monitoring our environments, more specifically the places where we work, live and play.



## Disease and Injury Prevention

The efforts to reduce the onset or severity of a disease process or injury before it starts.



## Health Promotion

The process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over and improve their health.



## Emergency Preparedness and Response

To safeguard the health of the population and ensure preparedness and response to a range of anticipated and unforeseen disruptions.





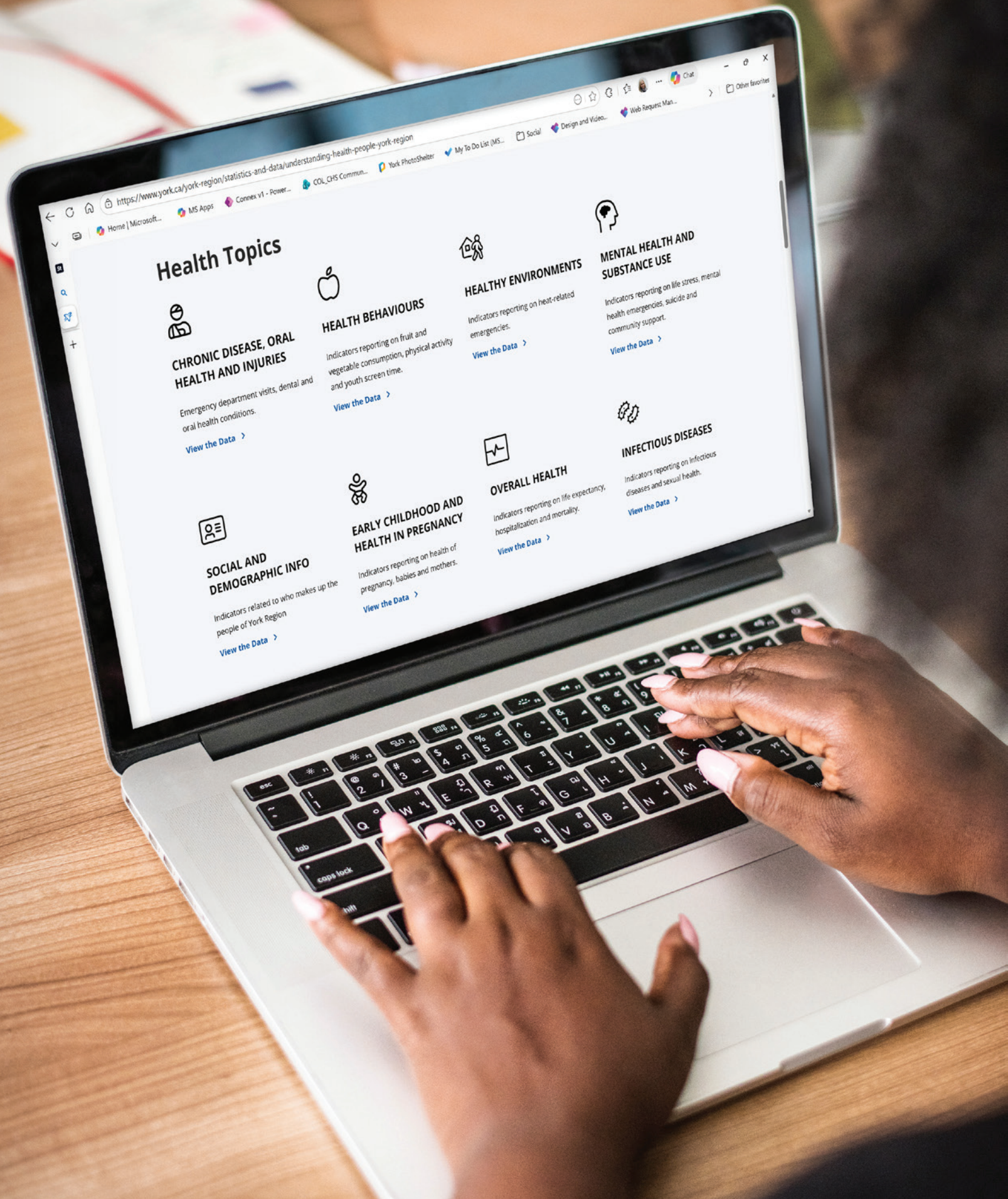
# POPULATION HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Involves understanding the health of populations and the factors that underlie health at a point in time. This is frequently expressed through community health profiles and health status reports to inform planning, delivery, management and evaluation of public health programs and services. Population health assessment includes consideration of biological, behavioural, environmental, social, structural and other factors that affect health.

In 2025, Public Health completed a detailed population health assessment which is summarized in the following report: [Understanding the Health of People in York Region: 2025 Key Trends Report](#). Two additional reports are being prepared focusing on seniors and mental health.

## INTERACTIVE DASHBOARD

An interactive dashboard called "[Understanding the Health of People in York Region](#)" was launched in 2025. The dashboard offers a visually engaging and accessible snapshot of the health of York Region residents. It currently features over 50 indicators that describe the health of the population grouped into eight key topic areas and allows users to track changes over time, compare local data to provincial data and examine subgroup differences. It is designed to be updated on an ongoing basis when new data becomes available.



## Health Topics



### CHRONIC DISEASE, ORAL HEALTH AND INJURIES

Emergency department visits, dental and oral health conditions.

[View the Data >](#)



### HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

Indicators reporting on fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity and youth screen time.

[View the Data >](#)



### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Indicators reporting on heat-related emergencies.

[View the Data >](#)



### MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE

Indicators reporting on life stress, mental health emergencies, suicide and community support.

[View the Data >](#)



### SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFO

Indicators related to who makes up the people of York Region

[View the Data >](#)



### EARLY CHILDHOOD AND HEALTH IN PREGNANCY

Indicators reporting on health of pregnancy, babies and mothers.

[View the Data >](#)



### OVERALL HEALTH

Indicators reporting on life expectancy, hospitalization and mortality.

[View the Data >](#)



### INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Indicators reporting on infectious diseases and sexual health.

[View the Data >](#)



# HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

The ongoing and systematic collection, collation and analysis of health related information for the purpose of taking public health action. Surveillance often acts as an early warning system. Information that is used for surveillance comes from many sources, such as reported cases of communicable diseases, wastewater monitoring, emergency department visits, cancer registries and population surveys.

## OPIOID MONITORING

Every week, the Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction Team monitors data that track opioid related harms across the Region, including: 911 calls related to overdoses, deaths due to opioid toxicity and emergency department visits due to overdoses. If the data shows a spike or upwards trend, it may signify the presence of a new or more potent substance in the unregulated supply and an alert is sent out to a collaborative of community agencies serving people who use drugs so they can advise their clients.

### Surveillance Related to Respiratory Season Viruses

Public Health has created the following surveillance dashboards to help partners track respiratory disease trends during the winter season:

- [Diseases of Public Health Significance Enhanced Surveillance Dashboard](#)
- [Integrated Respiratory Dashboard](#)
- [Institutional Outbreak Summary Dashboard](#)

## COVID-19

## Influenza

## RSV

Shown below are surveillance indicators which are used to observe the most recent trends for COVID-19 transmission within York Region. Each line shows the most recent trend for the past eight weeks. Using past data as reference, and interpretation is shown for the past three weeks. The colors indicate whether an increasing indicator value is showing a positive (green), stable (yellow), or negative (red) outcome. For more information about each indicator, please hover over the indicator name with your cursor.

### Severity

#### New Hospital Admission

In all York Region Hospitals



In the last three weeks, the number of hospital admissions has STABILIZED.



#### New ICU Admission

In all York Region Hospitals



In the last three weeks, the number of intensive care admissions has STABILIZED.



### High-Risk

#### New Outbreaks

In York Region Institutional Settings



In the last three weeks, the number of new institutional outbreaks in York Region institutions has STABILIZED.



#### Per Cent Positivity

In all Eligible Tested Residents



In the last three weeks, the per cent positivity of COVID-19 tests has STABILIZED.



### Community

#### Wastewater Viral Signal

For Early Warning



In the last three weeks, the viral signal in wastewater from York Region communities has DECREASED.



#### Respiratory Syndrome ER Visits

In York Region Hospitals



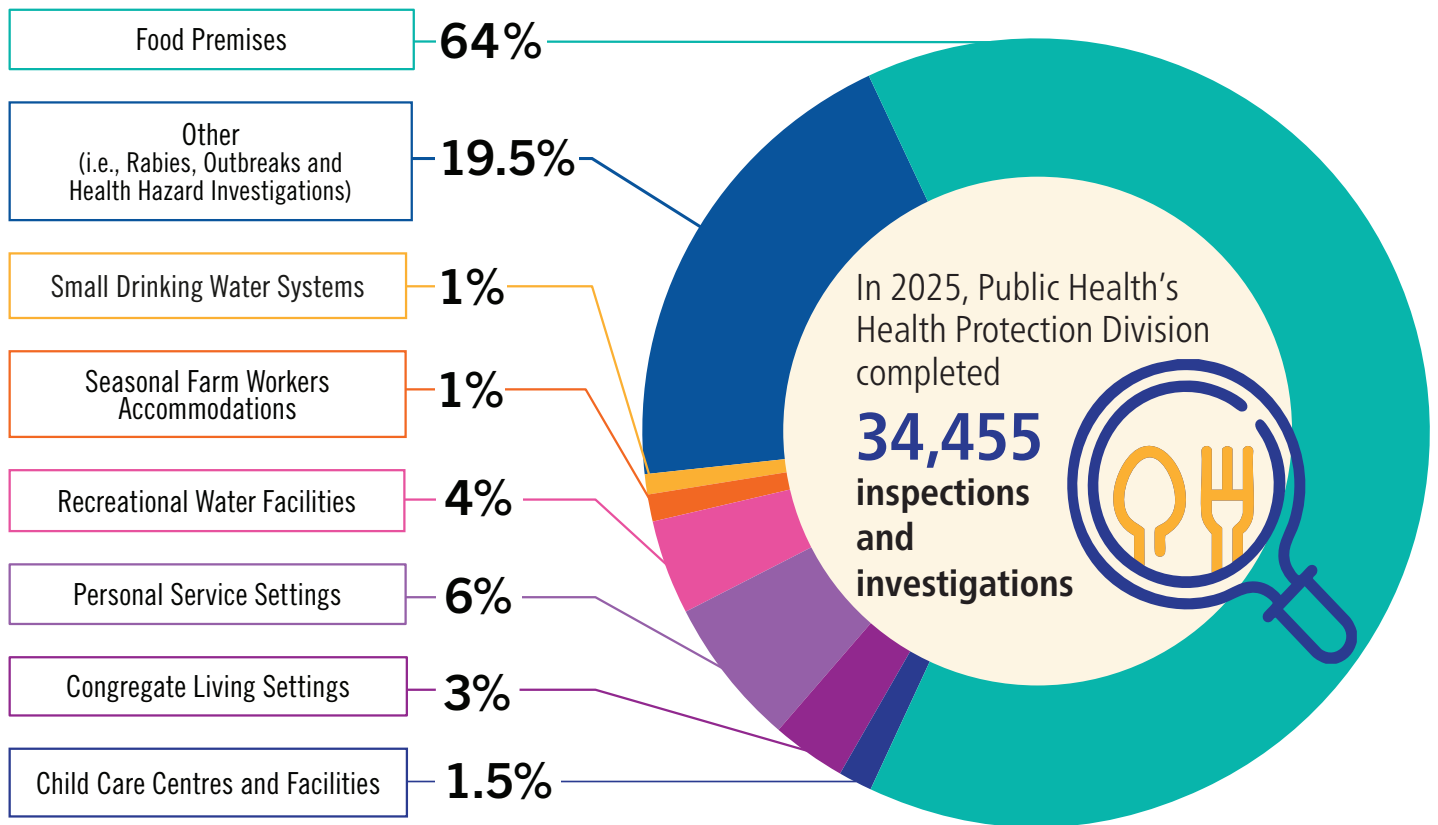
In the last three weeks, emergency room visits in York Region hospitals has INCREASED.





# HEALTH PROTECTION

Health protection involves inspecting and monitoring our environments, where we work, live and play. Public Health delivers programs and services to reduce the incidence and spread of infectious diseases, food and waterborne illnesses and other environmental health hazards (e.g., climate change). Key strategies include education, surveillance, inspection, enforcement and policy development.





## KEEPING IT COOL: INCREASING RESILIENCY OF YORK REGION SENIORS TO EXTREME HEAT

In 2025, Public Health initiated a project, funded by Health Canada, that aims to increase understanding of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of seniors and their caregivers, as it relates to extreme heat. The project will run until 2028 and will inform opportunities to ensure seniors, caregivers, communities and local organizations are prepared and equipped to prevent heat-related health impacts among seniors.



# DISEASE AND INJURY PREVENTION

Disease and injury prevention refers to efforts to reduce the onset or severity of a disease process or injury before it starts.

Examples of **primary prevention initiatives**, aimed at preventing a disease before it even begins, include:



## Vaccination:

In 2025, Public Health administered

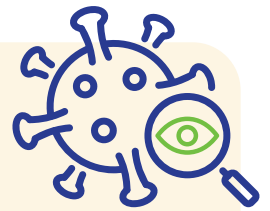
**73,864** vaccines

## Case and contact management:

Public Health managed

**4,333**

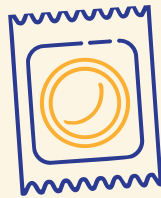
cases of reportable infectious diseases such as measles, invasive group A strep, tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections to prevent further spread to others



## Condom distribution:

**20,665**

condoms were distributed to prevent sexually transmitted infections



Examples of **secondary prevention initiatives**, aimed at early detection to prevent a disease process that may have already started from getting worse, include:

## School dental screenings:

**40,866**



children and youth received screenings during the 2024-2025 academic school year to identify dental needs

## Sexually transmitted and blood borne infections testing:

**18,529**

tests completed to screen high risk individuals



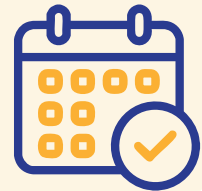
# PUBLIC HEALTH SEXUAL HEALTH CLINICS

Public Health operates five sexual health clinics in Markham, Vaughan, Newmarket, Richmond Hill and Georgina as well as offering outreach service in local emergency housing sites across the Region. As a result of the clinics and outreach, clients are able to:

- Access comprehensive sexually transmitted infections (STI) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) screening
- Obtain treatment for STIs to reduce complications and prevent further transmission
- Acquire vaccines such as Human Papilloma Virus vaccine, condoms and other harm reduction supplies
- Receive factual and unbiased sexual health counseling and safer sex teaching

Number of clinic appointments in 2025:

10,883



## GETAKIT

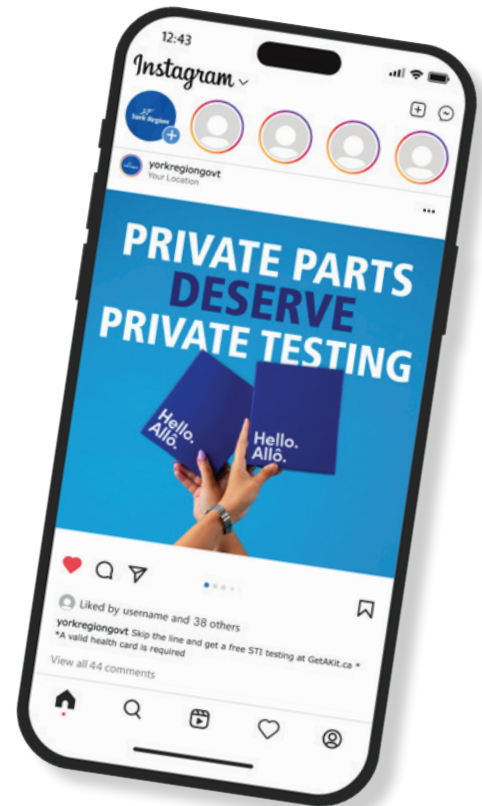
The **GetaKit** program was launched in April 2025. This online program is 24/7 and self-serve, allowing residents the opportunity to order and complete STI testing at home, themselves. 39% of people using this service between April 1 and December 31, 2025, were brand new clients who had never had STI tests done previously. This indicates that implementation of this program has increased Public Health's reach to people who may be reluctant to come into a clinic and get tested by a health professional.



Number of GetaKit orders:

682

(April 1 to December 31)



Example of the GetaKit campaign promoted through our York Region Instagram channel.



# HEALTH PROMOTION

Health promotion is defined by the World Health Organization as, “the process of enabling individuals and communities to increase control over and improve their health.” It explicitly recognizes that individual lifestyle choices people make are largely influenced by wider forces like their social, economic and environmental conditions. It aims to not only improve the health of communities but ensure that health is evenly and fairly distributed across the population and that community engagement and empowerment is prioritized.

## COMMUNITY APPROACH WORKING GROUP

The goal of Community Approach Working Group is to meaningfully engage, empower and support youth (ages 14 to 17) in South Markham to lead community based health promotion initiatives. After a thorough analysis of data, South Markham was identified as an area of priority based on a number of socioeconomic factors and the Markham Youth Voice (MYV) group was formed. MYV now meets regularly to collaborate on health topics that matter most to them, including feeling connected, having youth friendly spaces, overall health and well-being, safety and diversity. MYV’s first project focused on strengthening intergenerational connections with seniors. MYV members work with local organizations to create stronger relationships between youth and seniors through activities like gentle physical movement, helping with technology and playing board games.



“

As one youth from Markham Youth Voice shared,

**“I created a lot of memories at places that I call a community with people who I love.”**

These voices are shaping more inclusive and connected neighbourhoods.

”



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

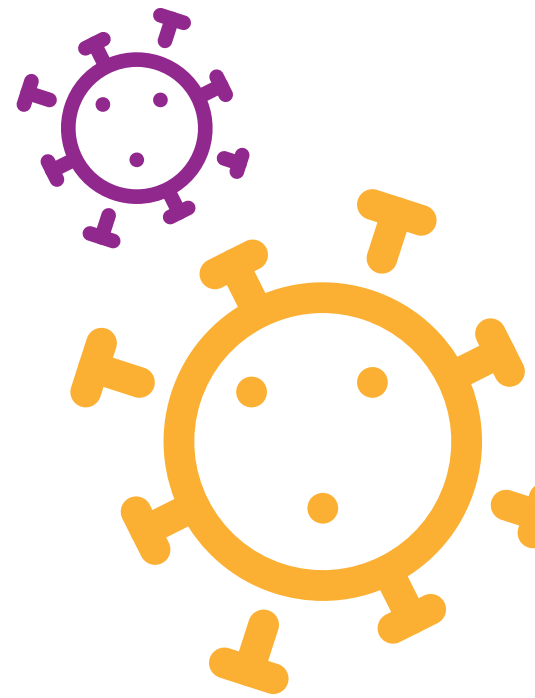
To safeguard the health of the population and ensure preparedness and response to a range of anticipated and unforeseen disruptions arising from natural, technological or human-made hazards including infectious disease threats and climate related emergencies. Such incidents can have profound impacts to public health, the broader health system and the well-being of communities.



## EMERGENCY PLANNING AND MEASLES RESPONSE

In 2025, Public Health revised the Public Health Emergency Plan (the Plan). The Plan provides strategic and operational direction for Public Health to effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from disruptions and emergencies with public health impacts. As part of emergency planning, Public Health:

- Participated in six emergency preparedness exercises
- Conducted an all-staff test of York Region Public Health's emergency notification system, increasing year-over-year participation by roughly 35%
- Completed an extensive learning needs assessment to determine emergency management training needs for the Public Health Branch



## 2025 MEASLES RESPONSE

Public Health had the opportunity to put the Plan into action in 2025 during the response to an unprecedented number of measles cases across York Region. Public health management of measles requires time sensitive investigation and a significant amount of follow up with exposed contacts to prevent further spread and complications.

In late 2024, a provincial outbreak began, with a total of **2,376** cases reported by the end of the outbreak on October 6, 2025. **Public Health investigated 13 confirmed cases locally and over 2,700 contact investigations.** Prior to this outbreak, York Region had only one case of measles every few years.

A major success during the outbreak was the ability to rapidly scale public health operations to address the response and ensure the well-being of the community.

## Contact Us

1-877-464-9675

TTY: Dial 711

[accessyork@york.ca](mailto:accessyork@york.ca)

[york.ca/Health](http://york.ca/Health)



26-PH1-126

