



COVID-19 is alive and well:
Don't let your guard down

Description

We must continue to take precautions to stop the spread of Omicron

By Irwin Rapoport

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We're not out of the **COVID-19** woods, not by a long shot. **Omicron** is spreading rapidly and while some may believe that the variant, which originated in South Africa, is the virus' last hurrah, let's not be so easily lulled by a false sense of security.

Prince Prospero in [Edgar Allan Poe's *The Masque of Red Death*](#) may have thought he and his friends were safe, shut away in his castle while Red Death traversed his lands, but it caught up with our friend in the end, and the outcome was not pleasant.

Spanish Flu, as I have noted in [previous articles](#), went extinct after its third tour around the planet. With COVID-19 and nearly eight billion people on Earth, with so many unvaccinated, the virus has plenty of space to explore and bodies to infect. We don't know if a new variant shall arise, but Omicron did and it has taken the world by storm, accounting for the vast majority of new cases in many countries, including Canada, the United States, and European nations.

Moreover, some people who have been double-vaxxed have contracted Omicron, so vaccinations alone are insufficient protection.

We are all tired of COVID-19 and the precautions we must take to stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus. We would love for life to return to normal and have carefree days where we can let loose and relax. However, now is not that time.



Before Omicron's appearance, many people assumed that the light at the tunnel was near but we all know that changed the game plan for the Christmas holidays. In Quebec, we have had days with 15,000 plus new infections. If that is not enough to worry you, hospitalizations are up taxing the health care system, and deaths are increasing. Just a few days ago, the daily death toll was 46. Lives are being lost and families are suffering.

We are all tired of COVID-19 and the precautions we must take to stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus. We would love for life to return to normal and have carefree days where we can let loose and relax. However, now is not that time. We still have to think out ourselves and others and be aware of our actions and the consequences. Yes, you are asked to go the extra inning, and some of the government leaders exhorting you to do so, are flawed and inconsistent and have put forth contradictory regulations, but please think of the bigger picture and how your actions can help save a life and avoid unnecessary suffering.

There are things we can do and they are easy to do:

- **Get fully vaccinated** and urge those whom you know, who are not, to receive their vaccinations. There are [many ways](#) to convince the reluctant to be vaccinated – employ the method that works best.
- **Wear a mask** when among people. Many do not like wearing them but it is an effective tool that we have in our arsenal. During the Spanish Flu experience, there were anti-maskers and those who opposed closing the schools, bars, restaurants, cinemas and theatres, annual parades such as the St. Patrick's Day parade, etc., but vigilant we must be.
- **Wash your hands** when you come back home from being out in public, and when you enter a store, wash your hands with the soap they provide at dispensers.
- **Help out people at risk of catching COVID-19**, such as the elderly and those with weakened immune systems. If you can do errands for such people, pitch in. If we can reduce their exposure, this avoids them getting sick, having to be hospitalized and at worse, losing their lives.
- **Ask for your COVID-19 testing kits**, which are available at pharmacies for free. They can be an effective tool to determine if you have the virus, if someone in the household believes they have symptoms or to find out whether one is infected prior to visiting a relative or friend who could be exposed to the virus. The testing device is easy to use and the results are fairly reliable.

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Sending the students back to schools, which are proven vectors for the spread of COVID-19, has been questioned by a good deal of medical authorities and individuals. In Quebec, the government is adamant about the schools being open and refusing to recognize the consequences, simply shrugging them off as being normal. It would have been preferable to give parents a choice of sending their children to school or having them take remote classes.

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However, we have the choice of banding together and doing what is right to help keep COVID-19 from spreading and mutating. We're dealing with a sticky wicket, a nasty one, but now is not the time to give in, surrender, let down our guard, or deliberately look the other way and do something that we know can negatively impact others, be they friends, family or strangers.

We shall get through this bitter experience, which is not as bad or lethal as the Black Death, Plague of Athens, Spanish Flu, and other medical adventures that humanity has encountered. We know what is required of us, and we can act upon the desires of our better angels.

We have made it this far via COVID-19 and we may have to live with it for another year or two, but we can survive and do what is right. The sacrifices asked of us are not as severe as those who fought in the First and Second World Wars and those working daily in hospitals and other essential services. If these people can do their bit, so can we. Thus, let us follow the adage "keep calm and carry on."

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