

Act now to minimize spread of COVID-19 in Huron-Perth

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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As the expected rise in cases of COVID-19 continues across the province, Dr. Miriam Klassen, Medical Officer of Health, calls on all residents to follow the current public health recommendations. “We know that COVID-19 is transmitting in our neighbouring communities and it may be in ours,” says Dr. Klassen. “I call on everyone to take our public health recommendations seriously: maintain a healthy physical distance from others, self isolate if you’ve returned from travelling, stay home if you’re sick, wash your hands often, and limit group gatherings at this time. Now is the time for us to flatten the curve.”

Due to limited testing capacity across the world, not every symptomatic person in Huron and Perth can be tested for COVID-19 at this time. As elsewhere, testing locally has been focused on priority populations. So far in Huron Perth, 101 people have been tested, with 73 negative, 26 pending, and two confirmed cases.

“Since we cannot test each person who is sick at this time, it’s important that everyone takes seriously any symptoms of cough, fever and shortness of breath,” says Dr. Klassen. Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) recommends that if you become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, self-isolate immediately and seek additional guidance using the province’s on-line assessment tool or by calling your primary healthcare provider. Always call ahead before you go to an emergency room or your doctor’s office. Some residents who are sick with suspected COVID-19 symptoms may be advised to get tested by their family doctor or by public health.

Community exposures

Waterloo Region Public Health has made HPPH aware of a confirmed COVID-19 case in one of their residents who attended an event at the Seaforth Ag Hall on the evening of Saturday, March 14. As part of contact tracing, Waterloo public health staff will directly contact known close contacts of the case, including close contacts that may have attended at that event.

Anyone who attended the event is asked to self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing). If you develop symptoms, you are asked to self-isolate and take the online assessment tool (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment>) for further direction.

Dr. Klassen adds that as more cases are confirmed, we may learn of public places those cases visited while they had symptoms. There will be cases where HPPH believes there might be an exposure risk to others and we will need to alert our community.

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However, Huron Perth Public Health will not violate patient privacy and not comment about any specifics around an individual case of COVID-19. We encourage others to not pursue this information unless an individual issues their own statement to this effect. Huron Perth Public Health will contact residents directly if you are a close contact.

Social distancing and self-isolation

Measures such as self-isolation and social distancing are aimed at limiting the number of people you come into contact with and are very important in reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Social distancing includes, but is not limited to:

- Working from home where possible.
- Avoiding non-essential trips in the community.
- Limiting or cancelling group gatherings.
- Avoid all large gatherings of over 50 people.
- Planning virtual meetings instead of in person.
- Maintaining a distance of 2 metres (two arms' length) between yourself and others.

The latest recommendations on self-isolation for different scenarios is available at www.hpph.ca/en/health-matters/covid-19-self-isolation-information.aspx. Please follow the directions. "It is possible that if people do not follow directions, governments will have to implement more restrictive measures."

If you are concerned about a person's actions in your community, HPPH encourages you to have a respectful conversation with that person and remind them about the current recommendations for stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our community. You can direct them to our website at www.hpph.ca/coronavirus for the latest recommendations.

With the expectation of community spread, we encourage residents to seek information from credible sources, such as our website at www.hpph.ca and to avoid sharing unconfirmed information.

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