



Renfrew County and District Health Unit  
*"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"*

## For Immediate Release

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(Pembroke, Ontario, March 20, 2020)

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is urging residents to take social distancing measures seriously. During these trying times, we all need to do our part to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in Renfrew County and District. We are asking all residents to take the necessary precautions to not only protect themselves, but to protect their family, friends, colleagues and community members that may not be able to fight the virus. In times like these, it is more important than ever that we all do our part to keep our community safe.

RCDHU is reminding residents that social distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people that you come into close contact with. This includes the following measures:

- Whenever possible, spend time outside and in settings where people can maintain a 2 metre distance from each other.
- Avoiding non-essential trips in the community.
- If you have to go into the community for an essential trip via taxi or rideshare, be sure to keep the windows down.
- Avoiding visits to Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Supportive Housing, hospitals, Hospices and other congregate care settings unless the visit is absolutely essential.
- Talk to your supervisor, manager, or employer about the possibility of working from home.
- If you have meetings planned, consider doing them virtually instead of in person.
- Avoid sending children to daycare.
- Limit or consider cancelling group gatherings of greater than 10 people.

Please note that this is not meant to say you must stay confined in your homes. You can still go outside to take a walk, go to the park, or walk your dog. If you need groceries, go to the store, just be sure to follow proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette if you do so, and when you are outdoors, avoid crowds and maintain a distance of 2 metre from those around you.

RCDHU wants to remind residents that while you may not feel sick, and while we know these measures are an inconvenience, please be mindful of the members of our community who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 than others. We are all in this together.

We understand that during difficult times, people have different ways to cope. Whether this is through faith, family or friends. However, for the safety of our community, we are asking people to avoid any congregations or gatherings of large groups greater than 10 people. In regards to social gatherings, RCDHU is recommending that:

- individuals stay home unless necessary;
- any social gathering, activity or event that exceeds 10 people be cancelled or postponed including faith or family gatherings.

This is a reminder that according to the Government of Canada, all international travellers must:

- Self isolate for **14 days** upon return to Canada
- Self isolate for **14 days** if you have symptoms like fever or new cough, regardless of travel.
- Isolate and shelter in place if you are 70 years or older.

You must not be at work if you fall under the above criteria.

Businesses and individuals who do not follow orders issued by the province or their local public health unit can be fined or closed.

While we understand peoples concerns regarding COVID-19 testing, **asymptomatic individuals do not qualify** for COVID-19 testing which is based on the case definition from the province of Ontario.

In order to better respond to concerns regarding COVID-19, RCDHU has extended our call hours and is taking calls 7-days a week; 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. We ask you to be patient as RCDHU is experiencing high call volumes. We have also updated our call information to better respond to calls. To contact us dial (613) 735-8654. Before you call, RCDHU encourages you to take the COVID-19 self-assessment at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/#q0>.

To ensure optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District, RCDHU has postponed all clinics and classes, except for some immunization clinics until further notice.

RCDHU continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation daily and there are currently **no confirmed cases** in Renfrew County and District as of March 20, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

For more information, visit the RCDHU's website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/novel-coronavirus-covid-19-2/>, or for COVID-19 information for workplaces, visit: <https://www.rcdhu.com/covid-19-information-for-workplaces/>.

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