



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 21, 2020)

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) would like all residents to know that you **do not** require a phone assessment by RCDHU to access appropriate COVID-19 care. RCDHU is encouraging residents to complete the interactive [self-assessment tool](#) released by the Government of Ontario to help you to determine how to seek further care.

If you have **severe symptoms** (you have frequent shortness of breath and cannot manage your symptoms at home):

- please **call 9-1-1 immediately**; or
- go to the hospital emergency department and pay attention to special signage.

If you have **MILD symptoms** (you are NOT short of breath and can manage symptoms reasonably at home) regardless of travel:

- Immediately self-isolate from others for 14 days.

Please note that most people with mild symptoms will recover on their own at home.

If you have **escalating symptoms** such as a fever and/or new or worsening cough and have either traveled outside of Canada or been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days:

- Do NOT call Renfrew County and District Health Unit.
- Call your health care provider (if available).
- If your health care provider is closed, go to the hospital emergency department and pay attention to special signage.

RCDHU would also like to remind residents that according to the Government of Canada, all international travellers must:

- Self isolate for **14 days** upon return to Canada if you have travelled from another country.
- Self isolate for **14 days** if you have symptoms like fever, new cough, or difficulty breathing.

- Contact Renfrew County and District Health Unit at 613-735-8654 within 24 hours of arriving in Canada and provide your contact information if you are returning from Italy, Iran, or Hubei province (China).

Additionally, RCDHU recommends that:

- EVERYONE self-monitor for symptoms, regardless of travel or contact with infected individual(s). If you develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate for 14 days.
- Any individual over the age of 70 years, self-isolate.

You must **not** be at work if you fall within the above criteria. Businesses and individuals who do not follow these important public health rules can be fined and/or closed.

For employees, if your employer requires a sick note please send them the following [letter from Renfrew County and District Health Unit](#). For employers, please visit our [COVID-19 info page for workplaces](#).

RCDHU is urging residents to take social distancing measures seriously. 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. Social distancing involves taking steps to limit the number of people that you come into close contact with. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Spend time outside and in settings where people can maintain a 2-metre distance from each other.
- Avoid non-essential trips in the community.
- If you must go into the community for an essential trip via taxi or rideshare, be sure to keep the windows down.
- Avoid visits to Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Supportive Housing, 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.
- Consider virtual meetings, instead of meeting in person.
- Avoid sending children to daycare, if possible.
- Cancel group gatherings of more 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-metres from those around you.

In accordance with the above, RCDHU recommends the following measures to reduce the spread of germs including the novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, then clean your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve and then clean your hands.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, unless you have just cleaned your hands.
- If you are ill, stay home.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Get your flu shot.
- Avoid crowded areas/events with more than 10 people.
- Avoid visiting family/friends who live in long-term care and/or retirement homes.

We understand that during difficult times, people look to different ways to cope. Whether this be through your 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. Therefore, 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.

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.

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. The new information is as follows: (613) 735-8654.

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.

For more information on how to self-monitor, self-isolate, or isolate for COVID-19, visit: <https://bit.ly/38ZdLX6>.

RCDHU continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation daily and there are currently **no confirmed cases** in Renfrew County and District as of March 21, 2020 at 6:18 p.m.

Keep yourself up to date on the changing COVID-19 situation by visiting:

- Government of Ontario: The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus>). Information is updated everyday, seven days a week at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. ET.

and

- Government of Canada Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Outbreak Update (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novelcoronavirus-infection.html>)

For more information, visit the RCDHU 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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