



"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, 2:05 p.m., November 30, 2021)

RCDHU Reports Increased Community Transmission of COVID-19 – Residents to Remain Vigilant

Throughout the month of November, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) has seen increased community transmission of COVID-19, reporting 63 confirmed cases of COVID-19 across Renfrew County and District (RCD). This is more than double the number of cases reported in October 2021 (29 cases), with nearly half of cases residing in the City of Pembroke, Township of Laurentian Valley, or Township of Petawawa. As a result, more than 500 high-risk contact investigations have been opened by RCDHU staff, resulting in an average of 8 high-risk contacts per 1 confirmed COVID-19 case in RCD.

"Our case investigations are highlighting that residents are ignoring mild symptoms and continuing to attend school, work and other social activities while sick. This is especially of concern with the introduction of the new variant Omicron found close to our region in nearby Ottawa," says Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health, RCDHU. "The choices we make now will impact how we spend the holidays. It is essential that residents step up and do the right thing, including getting vaccinated, if you haven't already and stay home if you are sick, even if you are vaccinated," continues Dr. Cushman.

All residents are encouraged to keep social gatherings small, and close contacts consistent.

Do not ignore minor symptoms such as itchy/scratchy or sore throat, runny nose or headache. If you experience any symptoms of COVID-19 you should immediately self-isolate and get tested. To book a COVID-19 test with Renfrew County Virtual Triage Assessment Centre (VTAC) visit <https://rcvtac.ca/>. If you cannot book online call VTAC at 1-844-727-6404.

Protecting our children and schools

RCDHU is tracking increased cases in our schools. Since September 2021, 22 per cent of individuals aged 0 to 17 years who have tested positive for COVID-19 have had symptoms that are not caught in the Provincial school screening tool, such as a runny nose, sore throat, headache, and extreme fatigue. Parents are urged to remain diligent and keep their child home at the first sign of any symptoms of illness.

"While infection prevention and control protocols and screening have helped prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools, we are seeing that children are attending school while sick," says Dr. Robert Cushman. Parents of school-aged children are reminded that they play a key role in preventing COVID-19 and keeping other illnesses out of our schools. Parents must screen

their child/children before they attend school each day and children should stay home when they have any symptom of illness, even if fully vaccinated.

We recognize the impact keeping a child home from school has on parents, but your choice to keep your child home when sick can help prevent isolating an entire class for 10 days – which impacts many families.

Individuals aged 18 to 40

Since September 2021, more than 1 in 3 COVID-19 cases in Renfrew County and District have been among individuals aged 18 to 40. This age group also has the lowest rate of COVID-19 vaccination, which increases the potential risk of spread. Individuals aged 18 to 40 are urged to do their part to protect the community from the spread of COVID-19. This includes staying home when sick with any symptoms, keeping social gatherings small and contacts consistent, and getting vaccinated.

To book a COVID-19 vaccination appointment, visit the [COVID-19 & Influenza Vaccine Bookings Link](#). Residents are also encouraged to contact their local pharmacy to book a COVID-19 vaccine.

Please continue to complete the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) or [COVID-19 school and child care self-assessment tool](#) **daily** before going to work, school or daycare, to monitor for symptoms and proper guidance.

For more information visit RCDHU's website at: <https://www.rcdhu.com/> or call 613-732-3629.

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