



## MEDIA RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

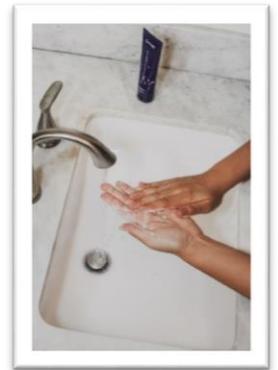
Wednesday, March 4, 2020, Peterborough

# Everyone Has a Role Preventing the Spread of COVID-19

## *While Risk Remains Low, Community Advised to Prepare*

While there are still no local cases and the risk of severe illness remains low, Peterborough Public Health is advising organizations and local residents that now is the time to get ready for the arrival of COVID-19 in our area.

“Since there isn’t a vaccine developed yet, we will be mostly relying on behaviour changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. We are just now at the tipping point where non-travel related transmission may start to occur in Ontario,” said Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health. “Peterborough-area residents are known for their ability to pull together in demanding situations, so we are counting on everyone to do their part and protect their families and our most vulnerable groups from COVID-19.”



Peterborough Public Health has updated [its website](#) with clear steps residents and local organizations can take to prepare for COVID-19 and prevent spreading the virus.

- For individuals and families, their focus should be on personal practices such as proper handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, not sharing water bottles, straws, etc., and staying home when sick. If you get sick with respiratory symptoms and think you may have COVID 19, please call Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000, ext. 401 to speak with a nurse, or after business hours, call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000. For more information, please read [How Can I Protect Myself and My Family](#) on the COVID-19 webpage on [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca).
- In addition to preventing the spread of COVID-19, there are actions people can take to stay healthy during the disruptions an outbreak may cause. Please read [Preparing for a Potential Pandemic](#) on the COVID-19 webpage on [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca).
- For businesses and organizations, now is the time to complete Continuity of Operations plans in case of high absenteeism, consider cross-training staff for essential roles, and increase cleaning of workspaces. Please read [Information for Workplaces](#) on the COVID-19 webpage on [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca).
- For those considering travel abroad, please visit the Government of Canada website for [current travel advisories](#).

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“Older adults and those with underlying medical conditions are the ones at greatest risk of severe illness from COVID-19,” explained Dr. Salvaterra. “With our high population of seniors and many local residents suffering the effects of poor health due to low-income, we will be working closely with the partner agencies who support them to put in place as many protective factors as possible.”

Dr. Salvaterra noted that it is also critical at this time to keep our healthcare workers as safe as possible, and that Peterborough Public Health will work with local health service partners to identify the right strategies that will protect existing healthcare resources and also meet any increased demand for testing or follow-up due to COVID-19 illnesses.

Peterborough Public Health continues to monitor the situation very closely and has activated its Incident Management System.

“As a small public health agency, we have the advantage of being more nimble and have strong working relationships with local health and social service partners who communicate effectively,” said Dr. Salvaterra. “I am confident that this community will rise to the occasion, and want to be sure local residents have the right information and support they need to weather this evolving situation.”

For more information, please visit the COVID-19 webpage on [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca) or call 705-743-1000.

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