

Coronavirus: COVID-19 Information and Tips

Updated: July 3, 2020

What is an emergency order?

Governments across Canada have the ability to take extraordinary measures and instill new and temporary laws once government officials are of the opinion that certain emergency conditions have arisen. In this circumstance, the emergency condition came in the form of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. Usually a law requires that a declaration of Emergency be made before the government can exercise any such powers.

Examples of current emergency orders:

- Limiting employment to a single Retirement Home/Long Term Care
- Limiting the number of persons allowed to gather in one place
- Prohibiting unfair pricing on essential goods
- Closure of outdoor recreational activities
- Special rules regarding temporary pandemic pay

Why does the emergency order keep getting extended?

In order to maintain the health and well-being of the citizens of Ontario, Premier Doug Ford has extended existing emergency orders until July 15th, 2020. As long as there continues to be cases of COVID-19 in Ontario, there is potential for the emergency orders to continue being extended even further into the year. The emergency orders are in place to ensure that the public are adhering to all health and safety measures required to avoid a spike in cases as well as to avoid a possible second wave of the virus.

Mandatory use of masks/face coverings in public indoor setting

To protect the health and safety of our communities, Toronto City Council voted in favour of requiring masks or face coverings in all enclosed public spaces as of July 7 to help stop the spread of COVID-19. The Medical Officer of Health recommended to City Council to use its authority to legislate for the protection of health, safety and well-being of persons in Toronto to enact a temporary bylaw requiring businesses and facilities to have a policy that ensures masks or face coverings are worn by the public in the enclosed spaces under their control to prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 cases.

Mandatory use of masks/face coverings on the TTC

As of July 2nd, 2020, masks/face coverings have become mandatory to use while accessing TTC services. Exemptions will be made for children under two years of age and for those who have medical considerations or are unable to put on or take off a face covering. Not wearing a mask can carry a fine of \$195 however the TTC will be focusing more on educating their customers rather than implementing charges. The TTC will be handing out 1 million non-medical masks to those who need one. ^[1]_[SEP]

Why are congregate living settings and Long-Term Care (LTC) slower to reopen?

As we navigate the second stage of re-opening businesses in Ontario, some LTC and congregate settings are staying behind by following a stage one philosophy. As the future of COVID-19 is unknown and more and more people are beginning to gather and utilize businesses, we must remain vigilant to ensure that the integrity of our health and safety policies remain strong to maintain the well-being of our residents and staff. Vigilance comes in the form of not relaxing on our Infection Prevention and Control policies, keeping the residents at home, and maintaining a strict visitor's policy.

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Here's what we know:

Common symptoms of COVID-19 Include:

- Fever of 37.8°c or greater
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath

Other signs and symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, sneezing or congestions (in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as allergies, etc.)
- Clinical or radiological evidence of pneumonia

Atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Unexplained fatigue
- Delirium
- Unexplained or increased number of falls
- Acute functional decline
- Exacerbation of chronic conditions
- Chills
- Headaches
- Croup
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
- Unexplained tachycardia
- Unexplained hypoxia (even if mild)
- Decrease in blood pressure
- Lethargy
- Multisystem inflammatory vasculitis in children

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to the flu with fever, coughing and shortness of breath being the most common symptoms. It appears to mainly be spread through close person-to-person contact. It may be possible for someone to touch a surface or object with the virus on it and then touch their nose or mouth and become infected, but this is not the main way the virus spreads, according to many reliable sources including the WHO and CDC. In addition to all the normal things you do to stay healthy, the preventive measures are the same as for the flu or other viruses, according to CDC:

1. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
2. As the province starts to open up the economy, keep in mind that most stores require patrons to wear a mask. Ensure that you do not touch the front of the mask as this is where the virus would be. See appendix for proper removal of masks.
3. Do not touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
4. Ensure you have two weeks' worth of supplies on hand such as:
 - Incontinence supplies (Wipes, briefs, etc.)
 - Masks
 - Gloves
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Groceries
 - Household cleaners and disinfectant products
5. Stock up your freezer with healthy pre-made meals.
6. Have a minimum of 2 weeks' worth of medication available to you.
7. As we start to see a return to normalcy, some Doctors are starting to see more patients in person with strict safety protocols in place. If you absolutely need to visit your doctor, call ahead to ensure it is safe to do so and follow all directions from the medical team such as how early to arrive.
8. Cover your cough or sneeze in the sleeve of your elbow or with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash immediately.
9. Carry disinfectant and infection prevention products with you if you are in the community such as hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and a mask.
10. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or disinfectant wipe. **For example**, *your cell phone, door knobs, light switches, water kettle/coffee maker, TV remote, handles on mobility devices, car steering wheel and gear shifts, banisters, toilet flusher, computer keyboard and mouse, table edges, medication bottles, etc.*
11. Monitor yourself for unusual health symptoms. Stay home if you are sick and contact your physician or Ontario Public Health if you are experiencing any of the COVID symptoms listed above.
12. Maintain at least a 2 metre distance between yourself and others, especially when out in the community.
13. Continue to be well informed by following the local news as well as daily live updates from each level of Government. (11am= Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, 1pm = Premier Doug Ford)
14. It is normal to feel worried during a crisis, but do not overreact and panic. Talk to people such as friends and family about how you are feeling. It is important to recognize when it might be beneficial to speak with a professional, so do not hesitate to contact your health care provider as they are equipped to refer you to the right person who can help.

15. As things are appearing to return to normal, it is important to remember that we are not out of the woods yet. The virus is still very much as dangerous as it was when this all began, and we must ensure we continue to follow all social distancing and infection prevention measures, especially when out in the community.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding COVID-19 and further steps you can take to protect yourself and those around you from the virus, contact Sarah, our Outreach Communication Facilitator at 416-222-4448 or sarah.nydp@gmail.com.