

COVID-19 Information Bulletin #16

Date issued: May 7, 2020

Purpose of bulletin: To keep local stakeholders informed of the quickly-evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and its implications for Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph (WDG).

Due to the evolving nature of the situation, further updates may be forthcoming.
For more information visit www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca

Surveillance

- **Highlights**
 - Trends in community cases, as well as cases among residents of facilities in WDG, by onset date appear to be closely following trends in the reporting of cases to Public Health; although there appears to be a general decline in community cases, this is difficult to accurately assess at this point.
 - Overall confirmed case fatality rate (percentage) in Canada continues to rise each week: from 5.7% last week and 4.8% the previous week to 6.5% this week, higher than the cCFR in the USA and approaching the worldwide average of 6.9%.
- Information about cases in WDG can be found on [our website](#) and information about institutional outbreaks can be found in our [Retirement and Long-Term Care Outbreak Bulletin](#).

New or Amended Guidance Documents

- **New:** Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#) [May 2, 2020]
- **New:** Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 Patient Screening Guidance Document](#) [May 2, 2020]

COVID-19: Temporary Pandemic Pay Website

Learn about temporary financial support for eligible frontline and support workers fighting COVID-19 at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-temporary-pandemic-pay>. This new website includes information on the temporary hourly pandemic pay from your employer as well as lump sum payments. The website will be updated as new information is available.

Ontario Extends Emergency Declaration

Ontario is extending the March 17 declaration of emergency and subsequent orders, regulations and amendments issued under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* **until May**

19, 2020. Below are a few of the declaration and orders that have been extended ([full list available here](#)):

- [Declaration of a provincial emergency](#)
- [Closure of public places and establishments](#) (including recreational centres, libraries, private schools, childcare centres, bars and restaurants, theatres, concert venues) with exemption for emergency childcare for health care and frontline essential service workers
- [Prohibiting events and gatherings of more than five people](#)
- [Enforcement of emergency orders](#)
- Work deployment for [health service providers](#) and [long-term care homes](#)
- [Closure of non-essential workplaces](#)
- [Streamlining requirements for long-term care homes](#)

Additionally, all publicly funded schools and provincial parks and conservation reserves will remain closed until at least **May 31, 2020.**

Foundations of COVID-19 Prevention and Control

Public Health Ontario has posted IPAC webinars for Long Term Care/Retirement Homes and Congregate Living Settings on their [website](#). The links to the audio recordings are embedded within the slides.

WDG Assessment Centre

The Mount Forest Assessment Centre hours will be changing as of this weekend:

Mount Forest Sportsplex, 850 Princess St.

Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (closed from 12:30-1:30 p.m.).

Closed on weekends.



Physical Distancing Floor Decal

- WDGP has more physical distancing floor decals available for community partners to use at their locations.
- If you would like decals, please contact your corresponding WDGP liaison.

Announcements and Changes to Services

- On May 7, the [Government of Ontario](#) released a plan to resume scheduled surgeries and procedures. Timelines will vary from hospital to hospital and be conditional on approval by regional oversight tables. The framework, [A Measured Approach to Planning for Surgeries and Procedures During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) contains clear criteria that must be met before hospitals can resume scheduled surgeries.

- On May 6, the [Government of Ontario](#) announced that garden centres and nurseries will be able to open for in-store payment and purchases as early as May 9 and hardware stores and safety supply stores will be permitted to open for in-store payment and purchases. On Monday, May 11, retail stores with a street entrance can begin offering curbside pickup and delivery. The government is also expanding essential construction to allow below-grade multi-unit residential construction projects like apartments and condominiums to begin and existing above-grade projects to continue.
- On May 5, the [Government of Ontario](#) expanded virtual mental health services to help those experiencing anxiety and depression, including frontline health care workers, during the COVID-19 outbreak. These Internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (iCBT) programs will be provided at no cost to Ontarians.
- On May 5, [the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau](#), announced important measures within agriculture programs and an investment of more than \$252 million to support farmers, food businesses, and food processors who provide essential services to Canadians by ensuring a safe and reliable food supply. He also announced that the government intends to propose an additional \$200 million in borrowing capacity for the sector.

Latest Research

Please note: this section outlines an unbiased summary of emerging scientific research and literature for COVID-19 and is not intended to reflect public health guidance or messaging.

Symptoms, Severity

A systematic review by [Tong et al.](#) (Otolaryngol Head Neck Surg. May 5) has found a prevalence of olfactory and gustatory dysfunction of 52.73% and 43.9% respectively among patients with COVID-19. The authors conclude that “olfactory and gustatory dysfunction are common symptoms in patients with COVID-19 and may represent early symptoms in the clinical course of infection. Increased awareness of this fact may encourage earlier diagnosis and treatment, as well as heighten vigilance for viral transmission.”

A review by [Zareifopoulos et al.](#) (Monaldi Arch Chest Dis. May 5) examines the risk vs. possible benefits of treatment for relatively mild cases of COVID-19: “Optimal management of critically ill patients with COVID-19 is ... unclear, and the initial suggestion for early intubation as in typical ARDS may have caused significant harm. The management of mild cases of confirmed infection is another point of controversy, as drugs which may be repurposed for COVID-19 treatment have significant, potentially irreversible toxic effects and their use in mild cases of a viral illness which is typically self-limited may be harmful.”

Control Measures/Epidemic Forecasting

[Zhu et al.](#) (Sci Total Environment April 15) observed significantly positive associations of PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO₂ and O₃ with new cases of COVID-19 in China; a 10-µg/m³ increase (lag0-14) in PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, NO₂, and O₃ was associated with a 2.24%, 1.76%, 6.94% and 4.76% increase in the daily counts of confirmed cases, respectively. “Our results indicate that there is a significant relationship between air pollution and COVID-19 infection, which could partially explain the effect of national lockdown and provide implications for the control and prevention of this novel disease.”

Contact Information for Additional Support

Updated: WDGPH COVID-19 Call Centre

- **For health-related questions**, including symptoms, close contacts, travel or if you are a health care provider:
 - Call 519-822-2715 ext. 7006
 - Available Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and weekends from 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
- **For non-health related questions**, including business or workplace concerns, social distancing questions or non-emergency reporting questions:
 - Call 519-822-2715 ext. 4020
 - Available Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Reliable information sources:

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health website: www.wdgppublichealth.ca

Ontario Ministry of Health webpage: www.ontario.ca/coronavirus

Public Health Agency of Canada webpage: www.canada.ca/coronavirus