

COVID-19 Information Bulletin #8

Date issued: April 9, 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:**
 - The epidemic curve of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in WDG continues to show an increase in the occurrence of cases during late March and early April. This may have been partly influenced by the clearing of a backlog of pending tests in the province; a large number of test results were reported to Public Health last weekend.
 - Several residential facilities are now in outbreak.
 - Only one fatality has been confirmed in WDG to date; however, the confirmed case fatality rate for COVID-19 outbreaks tends to rise over time. The rise is due, at least in part, to the relatively long duration of illness before recovery or death.
 - Overall confirmed case fatality rate (percentage) in Canada has risen from 1.1% last week to 2.1% this week. This is consistent with most regions of the world, where cCFRs have generally risen over the course of the outbreaks.
- **WDGPH's COVID-19 Status Report** is now embedded on our website to make it more mobile and user friendly. The report will be updated with new data twice a day: in the morning at 8 a.m. and in the afternoon at 1 p.m. For more important notes about the data, [visit our website](#).
- Information about institutional outbreaks can be found in our [Retirement and Long-Term Care Outbreak Bulletin](#).

Avoid Gatherings During the Upcoming Holiday Weekend

- WDGPH is encouraging residents to avoid in-person family or faith gatherings over the holiday weekend.
- Don't gather with anyone outside of those currently living in your home. Connect using online and social media venues instead.

COVID-19 Clearance Testing for Health Care Providers

- WDG will begin to provide COVID-19 clearance testing for health care providers that require testing prior to returning to work.
- Testing will be offered at each of our three offices (Guelph, Fergus and Orangeville) and will be booked through reception.

Use of Non-Medical (Homemade) Masks

- Medical masks (like N95 masks) must be kept for health care workers and others providing direct care to COVID-19 patients.
- Wearing a non-medical mask (like a homemade cloth mask) has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. However, the use of non-medical masks or facial coverings can be an additional measure to protect others around you, even if you have no symptoms.
- Frequent hand washing and physical (social) distancing are still needed to reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus.
- Non-medical masks have limitations and you must ensure they are used safely. For more information, visit [our website](#).

Latest Research

Testing

Recognizing the variable and often low sensitivity of the RT-PCR tests widely used for diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection, [Wikramaratna et al.](#) (MedRXiv preprint April 7), a group of Oxford researchers, used mathematical modeling to explore the likelihood of obtaining false negatives by RT-PCR over time and under different conditions: “*...in scenarios where infected individuals are typically tested late we anticipate the false-negative rate to be 4 times larger than when patients are typically tested early. We also show how the probability of incorrectly identifying an individual as uninfected due to a false-negative test considerably reduces if all negative tests are repeated 24 hours later.*”

Interventions

Using a systematic review of studies, [Liang M et al.](#) (MedRXiv preprint April 7) investigated the protective efficacy of face masks against the acquisition of respiratory viruses. “*Meta-analyses suggest that mask use provided a significant protective effect (OR = 0.35 and 95% CI = 0.24-0.51). Use of masks by healthcare workers (HCWs) and non-healthcare workers (Non-HCWs) can reduce the risk of respiratory virus infection by 80% (OR = 0.20, 95% CI = 0.11-0.37) and 47% (OR = 0.53, 95% CI = 0.36-0.79). Work by Kenyon C (MedRXiv preprint April 6) appears to support these findings: “Whilst these results are susceptible to residual confounding, they do provide ecological level support to the individual level studies that found face mask usage reduce the transmission and acquisition of respiratory viral infections.”*

Support for Businesses

- Review the [Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy \(CEWS\)](#) to learn more about avoiding layoffs and rehiring employees.
- Review the [Canada Emergency Business Account \(CEBA\)](#) to learn more about access to credit for small businesses and charities during COVID-19.

Announcements and Changes to Services

- On April 8, the [Government of Canada announced](#) temporary changes to the Canada Summer Jobs program that will help employers hire summer staff and provide young Canadians access to the jobs.
- On April 8, the [Government of Canada announced](#) construction hours for essential construction projects, such as critical projects in the health sector, will be extended to 24 hours a day in order to accelerate the process.
- On April 7, the [Government of Canada announced](#) the production of more medical supplies and equipment in Canada.
- On April 7, the [Government of Ontario announced](#) over \$37 million committed to support outbreak planning, prevention and mitigation efforts to ensure the health and well-being of Indigenous people and communities.

New WDGPH Webpages

- New [Seniors and caring for seniors](#) page
- New [Parents and families](#) page

Additional Resources

- [Resources](#) for mental health and substance use.
- PHAC Help reduce the spread of COVID-19 [poster](#).
- Government of Canada [COVID-19 app](#) to get all the latest info on COVID-19 in Canada.
- [ParticipACTION's guide](#) for indoor physical activity.

Contact Information for Additional Support

WDGPH COVID-19 Call Centre 519-822-2715 ext. 7006

- Available: Monday - Friday from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. and weekends from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- For inquiries about public gatherings, workplace concerns and protecting yourself from COVID-19: **Dial ext. 4020** open Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Reliable information sources:

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health webpage: www.wdgpublichealth.ca

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

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