

March 5, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Re: COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) continues to monitor the COVID-19 outbreak. The health and well-being of our residents is our top priority and we continue to work with our community, provincial, and federal health partners in response to this new virus.

The risk of infection in Simcoe Muskoka remains low.

For those who have plans to travel out of country over the next few weeks we encourage people to review the [Travel Advisories](#) posted by the Government of Canada prior to travel.

For returning travellers, the situation for the area you are travelling to may change while you are away. Upon return to Canada please visit the SMDHU [website](#) for up-to-date instructions for returning travellers.

At this time, if you or your child, have travelled recently in Iran or Hubei Province, China, you are asked to self-isolate for a period of 14 days after your last day at either of those areas. You are also asked to call SMDHU at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 within 24 hours of arriving in Canada, and we will provide you with further instructions.

For individuals who have travelled in other affected areas such as Mainland China (excluding Taiwan and Macau), Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Singapore, please monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days after leaving the affected area.

If after returning from the affected areas, you or your child, develop symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, difficulty breathing), please call your family doctor, Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 or SMDHU. For individuals who have travelled in an affected area, before you visit any health care provider, please call ahead to let them know about your travel history and symptoms. This will allow them to make special arrangements to see you quickly, provide testing, and ensure they use proper infection control measures.

We want to remind school communities that the best ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are the same as preventing the cold and flu. It is important to reassure your children about their personal safety and health. Telling children that it is okay to be concerned is comforting. Reassure them they are safe and there are many things they and the whole family can do to stay healthy, including:

- **Hand washing:** Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash your hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing or sneezing.

- **Cough/sneeze etiquette:** Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- **Stay home when sick:** Students/children should tell parents if they are not feeling well, and together make a plan to stay home from school.
- **Keep clean:** Keep hands away from face and mouth unless you have just washed your hands.
- **Stay healthy:** Stay healthy by avoiding contact with sick people, eating healthy foods, keeping physically active, and getting enough sleep.

As this is an evolving situation, we continue to remind residents of the importance of using credible sources to stay informed. Please check the SMDHU [website](#) for the latest information and instructions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles Gardner
Medical Officer of Health