

December 22, 2020	Community Update #16	COVID-19	Dr. Ian Gemmill, Acting Medical Officer of Health
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The COVID-19 pandemic response continues to evolve. As local and provincial activity increases, the Health Unit is once again providing a synopsis of the latest information to help ensure community members stay up-to-date.

What's New:

The Ontario government has announced it is imposing a province-wide shutdown:

- As of 12:01 am on Saturday, Dec. 26, the Ontario government is implementing a province-wide shutdown to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Full details of this announcement are listed in [this media release issued by the Province on Dec. 21](#). The province-wide shutdown will be in effect until Jan. 23, 2021 in southern Ontario.
- The entire southern portion of the province, including all of HKPR District Health Unit region (which includes Northumberland County, Haliburton County and the City of Kawartha Lakes) is covered by this shutdown. Maximum public health measures, widespread closures, and revised ways of doing business will now be in effect for at least the next 28 days. People are also strongly encouraged to stay home during the shutdown, except for essential items such as groceries and medical matters. For specific details about the shutdown, click on the [Province-Wide Shutdown – Government of Ontario Guidance Document](#) that details the new regulations and what businesses are allowed to open, operate in modified format or be shut.
- During the provincial shutdown, Ontario's colour-coded [COVID-19 Response Framework](#) will be paused. That means that measures in the Yellow-Protect category that the HKPR District Health Unit region had been in will be replaced by the tougher COVID-19 shutdown restrictions that come into effect on Dec. 26.

Key Highlights of Province-Wide Shutdown:

General:

- Everyone should stay home unless there is an essential reason to go out. Going out for reasonable exercise is also allowed.
- Limit trips outside your home to only getting essentials such as food and medication, going out for medical appointments, or supporting vulnerable community members.
- If going out, continue to follow important public health measures such as staying 2 metres apart from others and wearing masks/face coverings (ensure face coverings are tightly fitted to cover the nose, mouth and chin; scarves and bandanas are insufficient)
- No indoor gatherings are allowed, except with members of your own household (people you live with).
- Work from home if possible. Employers in all industries should make every effort to allow employees this option.
- Do not travel within or outside of Ontario. Travel outside your area should be limited to only essential purposes

Business Openings:

- No in-person indoor or outdoor dining is allowed. Restaurants/bars can only open for takeout, drive-through or delivery.
- Supermarkets, drug stores and other essential businesses can remain open for in-person shopping, but with capacity limits. Grocery stores and pharmacies can only operate at 50% capacity, while discount and big box retailers selling groceries will be limited to 25% capacity.

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- All other non-essential stores can open only for curbside pickup or delivery.
- Gyms/fitness clubs, personal care services (hair salons, tattoo parlours, etc.), museums and movie theatres are closed
- Business or organizations must continue COVID-19 screening for any workers or essential visitors entering the workplace. The screening tool should ask if staff have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#). This screening tool could be done electronically or using a [paper-based resource like the sample provided here](#).
- **All** businesses that are allowed to open must complete [a COVID-19 safety plan](#). A copy must be posted prominently and made available upon request.

Shopping Malls

- Closed for in-person shopping
- People may only enter the mall to: go to businesses and organizations permitted to be open (e.g., pharmacy, dentist, government services); go to the food court to get takeaway; or for curbside pickup by appointment at designated spots
- No one can loiter in any part of the shopping mall that is not related to the purpose of their visit

Places of Worship

- Maximum of 10 people allowed inside or outside for weddings, funerals and other religious services
- Consider virtual or live-streamed services instead

Recreational Facilities

- Most facilities for indoor sports and recreational fitness must close
- Ski hills are closed
- Outdoor recreational amenities such as ice rinks, snowmobile/cross-country ski trails, tobogganing hills, parks/recreation areas, etc. can stay open. Anyone using these facilities must ensure 2 metre physical distancing from anyone outside their immediate household
- Team sports or other sports/games where people may come closer than 2 metres of each other, are not permitted in these facilities

Schools and Daycares

- The return to school after the winter break is slightly altered. Elementary school students will not return to in-person learning until January 11. From Jan. 4-8, they will move to remote learning. Secondary school students will resume online learning on January 4 but will only return to school on Jan. 25.
- Most licenced childcare facilities will remain open throughout the province-wide lockdown period. *NOTE:* During the period when elementary schools are operating virtually (Jan. 4-8), 2021), licenced childcare centres are **not** allowed to serve school-aged children. All before and after school programs are also closed this same week.
- Day camps for children are closed.

HKPR Actions:

- With the increase in local cases, the Health Unit has moved back into “surge” response, drawing most staff back into pandemic response work. As a result, some Health Unit programs and services that had been reinstated, have once again been paused.
- At this time, HKPR District Health Unit offices will remain open during the provincial shutdown. Please be sure to check the Health Unit’s website for holiday closures and hours.
- The Health Unit is continuing to update its website to include new and seasonal information. Information has recently been added to provide further information about the provincial shutdown, as well as information on holiday activities, donating to food banks, and outdoor skating and skating rinks.

- There are currently three COVID-19 outbreaks in long-term care homes within the Health Unit's area. Updates on outbreaks in retirement homes and long-term care homes are provided on the Health Unit's [website](#). Other outbreaks can be found on the dashboard on the Health Unit's website.
- The Health Unit continues to participate in regular calls with the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, our health partners, our school board partners, our municipal partners, and our Community Emergency Management Groups (CEMGs) to share information and provide updates.
- Remember to stay up-to-date on the latest information by visiting these sites:
 - The Ontario Ministry of Health (www.ontario.ca/coronavirus)
 - Public Health Ontario website (www.publichealthontario.ca)
 - Public Health Agency of Canada (www.canada.ca/coronavirus)