

MEDIA RELEASE

COVID-19 Cases in Hearst

For Immediate Release - October 30, 2020



Timmins, Ontario – Today, Dr. Lianne Catton, Medical Officer of Health for the Porcupine Health Unit is updating the public about the increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases in our area. “As many of you are aware, there has been an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases. While community exposure is probable in every community, the Porcupine Health Unit is concerned about an increased risk of community exposure in the town of Hearst,” says Dr. Catton.

In order to reduce the risk of COVID-19, it is recommended that all Hearst residents adhere to the following **enhanced** precautions:

1. If a member of your household has symptoms and/or is awaiting COVID-19 test results, all members of the immediate household should self-isolate and monitor for symptoms. If you develop symptoms, continue to self-isolate and seek COVID-19 testing.
2. If you have symptoms, please call to get tested. The Hearst Assessment Center has added hours over the weekend to determine and limit the extend of spread:
 - Call 705-372-2913 to book your appointment directly. An appointment is required.
 - 1403 Edward St. (Hearst Medical Centre)

A heightened awareness of public health measures by all residents is required. **In addition to the enhanced measures, please continue to:**

- Stay home and self-isolate if you have any symptoms, even if they are mild. Call the COVID-19 Assessment Center for testing (705-372-2913).
- If you have been in close-contact with someone who has COVID-19, stay home and self-isolate for 14 days from your last contact with that person. If you develop symptoms, continue to self-isolate and seek COVID-19 testing. Porcupine Health Unit follows up with all contacts identified in case investigation.
- Wear a face covering or mask indoors in public spaces, as well as both indoors and outdoors, anytime you are with people from outside of your immediate household and cannot maintain 2 metres of distance.

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- Maintain 2 metres distance from everyone outside of your immediate household.
- Avoid play dates with other families in the neighborhood, as well as movie nights, sleepovers, and social gatherings with friends at bars and restaurants.
- Only attend restaurants, bars or other businesses with people you live with, and follow the public health measures that have been put in place.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Clean commonly touched surfaces
- Screen regularly for symptoms.

Slowing the spread of COVID-19 is everyone's responsibility and no one is immune to this infection. Community partners, businesses, and members of the community must continue to work together to protect our most vulnerable populations.

Refer to the following commonly asked questions:

I have symptoms, what should I do?

- Stay home and self-isolate even if your symptoms are mild
- Call the COVID-19 Assessment Center for testing at 705-372-2913

My family member has symptoms, what should I do?

- All members of the immediate household should stay home and self-isolate
- Monitor for symptoms
- If you do not have symptoms, you do not need to be tested.
- If symptoms develop, call the COVID-19 Assessment Center for testing

Why do I need to self-isolate if my family member has symptoms?

- This is an added precaution for the community at this time
- A person with COVID-19 is contagious 2 days before showing any symptoms
- You could be infected with COVID-19 and contagious without knowing

My co-worker has COVID-19, what should I do?

- The PHU helps the person with COVID-19 identify who is a close contact and instructs close contact to self-isolate for 14 days from the last time they interacted with the person who tested positive
- The PHU will provide close contacts with appropriate recommendations for testing
- If you have not been contacted by the PHU, then you are not a close contact
- Monitor for symptoms
- If symptoms develop, self-isolate and call the COVID-19 Assessment Center for testing at 705-372-2913

I went to a business that has been named as a possible exposure site. What should I do?

- If you do not have symptoms, self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days from the time of possible exposure
- If symptoms develop, self-isolate and call the COVID-19 Assessment Center for testing

Where can I call with questions or concerns?

- The Porcupine Health Unit COVID-19 Information Line is open 7 days a week.
- Call the toll-free number at 1-800-461-1818
- Weekend Hours: 11:00-3:00
- Monday-Friday: 8:30-4:30

Get the COVID-19 Alert (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covidalert>) to receive a phone notification if you may have been exposed to COVID-19 and let others know if you test positive without sharing any personal information.

Additional COVID-19 information can be found on the Porcupine Health Unit's website at phu.fyi/coronavirus.

Visit Ontario's website to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.

The Porcupine Health Unit is located in Northeastern Ontario, serving the entire Cochrane District and Hornepayne, in Algoma District. The main office is located in Timmins, Ontario, with branch offices in Cochrane, Hearst, Hornepayne, Iroquois Falls, Kapuskasing, Matheson, Moosonee and Smooth Rock Falls.

For further information, please contact:

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