

COVID-19 UPDATE

March 31, 2020

The Municipality of Temagami is continually monitoring COVID-19 and is working closely with the Timiskaming Health Unit and community partners to take preventative measures and respond appropriately.

March 30, 2020 – part of the statement from Dr. David Williams, Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario: Given the greater risk of severe outcomes to Ontarians who are elderly, I am also strongly recommending that individuals over 70 years of age self-isolate and stay home. This means only leaving home or seeing other people for essential reasons. Where possible, you should seek services over the phone or internet or ask for help from friends, family or neighbors with essential errands. This also applies to individuals who have compromised immune systems and/or underlying medical conditions.

What are some steps seniors and persons with weakened immune systems can take to protect themselves? To practice physical distancing, consider picking up their groceries once weekly and at off peak hours or ordering them online. If they need to pick up medications, they should call their pharmacy first before going in. Seniors and persons with weakened immune systems should look to have a healthy family member pick up their medication and drop it off at their door, or order their medication from a pharmacy that offers delivery.

What are steps that others can take to protect and support seniors and persons with weakened immune systems? It is best to visit them virtually rather than in person during the outbreak. If it is essential for you to visit, make sure that you are washing your hands, physical distancing and, if you feel even slightly unwell, **DO NOT VISIT.** Think about how you can best support them in your life by running errands or bringing them necessities.

For seniors who have special needs, such as those living with Alzheimer's disease and dementia, they may not fully appreciate the impact or the extent of COVID-19. It's important to keep the message simple. Family members can tell them, "There's an infection in our community and we want to protect you. Reassure them that they are safe and loved.

How do seniors and persons with weakened immune systems contract COVID-19?

For seniors and persons with weakened immune systems who are mobile, they may pick it up when they go out to public places or when they meet up with people in their community. Loved ones may also pass on the infection when they visit. **Remember: even people who may not have symptoms can spread the infection.**

I'm not able to visit my aging loved one. What are other ways I can support them?

If available, use technology, whether it is Skype or FaceTime to interact. It is so important to keep them engaged. A lot of times, a phone call is what is needed. Social isolation and loneliness can have negative impacts on seniors' health. We all need to make sure we keep them mentally engaged while physically keeping them protected from the infection.

ONTARIO'S CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH IS STRONGLY URGING THOSE OVER THE AGE OF 70 OR THOSE WITH COMPROMISED IMMUNE SYSTEMS OR UNDERLYING MEDICAL CONDITIONS TO STAY AT HOME.