

Kawartha Lakes health partners collaborate on coronavirus plans

This Week

Although the risk of becoming ill from COVID-19 remains low in Ontario, the local health unit and its community health partners continue to collaborate on plans should a case develop locally.

Since COVID-19 was first identified in Ontario, the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has been working with area hospitals — including Lindsay’s Ross Memorial — and its primary health care partners to ensure all organizations are kept up-to-date on information and changes coming from the Ministry of Health.

The health unit is also providing support to health care partners to ensure active screening protocols are in place and appropriate health care staff have been fit-tested for the proper protective equipment.

“There have been a number of improvements made in the way we prepare for widespread illnesses since we experienced SARS,” said health unit medical officer of health Dr. Lynn Noseworthy. “Across the province we have seen improvements in communication about the illness and cases, improved laboratory testing protocols and quicker test results shared with health professionals for the stringent contact followup and management involving potential cases. The bottom line is that we are prepared for if, and when, we may see a case locally.”

Noseworthy said seasonal respiratory illnesses, including influenza, are still circulating in the community. It is important to remember most people who have become ill with COVID-19 have experienced just mild symptoms and have recovered fully. The risk of serious illness appears to rise with age and the presence of other complicating factors.

To remain healthy, the health unit recommends such things as frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, staying home if ill, getting the flu shot and avoiding visiting people in hospitals or long-term care homes if sick.

Those who are ill and must visit a hospital emergency department, clinic or other health care provider are asked to call ahead or tell them immediately upon arrival of a respiratory illness and wear a mask while waiting to be seen.

For more information on COVID-19, visit www.hkpr.on.ca or for medical advice call Telehealth Ontario at [1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000). People are also encouraged to rely on credible sources of information including daily updates at the Ontario Ministry of Health (www.ontario.ca/coronavirus) or the Public Health Agency of Canada (www.canada.ca/coronavirus).