

Tim Hortons gets rid of Roll Up The Rim paper cups amid coronavirus outbreak

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Canadian coffee giant Tim Hortons is getting rid of Roll Up The Rim paper cups in advance of its iconic annual giveaway because of public health concerns over the novel coronavirus.

Changes to the nationwide contest, in which customers win \$30 million worth of prizes ranging from free coffee to electric vehicles, were announced Saturday, as the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Canada continued to rise.

“It just became obvious to us over the last few days that this isn’t the time to have team members in our restaurants collecting rolled up tabs from paper cups that have been in people’s mouths,” Duncan Fulton, chief corporate officer of Tim Hortons, told the Star.

“This was the right decision for the health and safety of our team members and our guests. As one of Canada’s most loved brands, and the largest restaurant company in the country, we obviously take our responsibility for health and safety very seriously.”

As of Friday, Ontario had confirmed two new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total in the province to 28. The virus is most commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets when he or she coughs or sneezes and through close personal contact with them, such as touching. It can also be spread when someone touches something with the virus on it and then touches one’s mouth, nose or eyes.

The giveaway contest now in its 35th year will run from March 11 to April 7, but prizes will be redistributed between the restaurants and the digital Roll Up The Rim contest. About \$14 million in prizes will be awarded in the form of free coffee and hot beverages at participating restaurants, where during the first two weeks cash registers will be programmed to randomly credit customers every nine transactions.

And \$16 million in prizes, including TVs, gift cards and vehicles, can be won through the digital Roll Up the Rim contest available to Tims rewards members, who will earn digital rolls when they scan their loyalty card or app when making a purchase. People can register for free to become members at rolluptherimtowin.ca or by downloading the Tim Hortons mobile app.

About 81 million Roll Up The Rim cups that have been printed, will now be recycled.

The announcement comes after the company and other industry giants, such as McDonald’s Canada, Starbucks and The Second Cup, said they were temporarily banning the use of reusable cups brought in by customers amid concerns over the coronavirus outbreak.