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### NEWS

## HOW YOU CAN HELP YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

BUY GIFT CARDS,  
ORDER TAKEOUT OR  
DELIVERY AND SAY  
THANKS, WRITES  
BOYNTON



JOHN  
BOYNTON  
Column

As more of us are practicing social distancing or self-isolation, huge numbers of small businesses in our local communities are feeling the impact.

Restaurants have been forced to close and many other local businesses are shutting down or drastically reducing their operating hours because of a lack of customers associated with the COVID-19 outbreak.

The newspapers and news websites owned by Torstar Corporation have long been supportive of local businesses in all the communities they serve. We believe small businesses are critical to the suc-

cess, strength and economic vitality of communities large and small.

And so, in these increasingly uncertain times we're urging our readers to offer their help - to show their love - for their favourite shops and stores. There are ways you can help - even if you are stuck at home:

**Shop locally:** Many small stores are still open. If you can leave your home to buy some goods, think of your nearby stores. And if you can't get outside, many local shops have part of their inventory online and they will deliver to your door.

**Buy gift cards:** Purchasing a gift card from a local business is a way of getting money to storeown-

ers now, when they need it the most.

**Order takeout or delivery:** Some restaurants and shops are offering options like home delivery or easy pick-up service. Consider ordering at least one meal a week this way.

**Urge government action:** Email your local mayor, provincial MPP and federal MP and request they consider reasonable assistance for small businesses.

**Say thanks:** At a time when all of us are stressed, it may ease the anxiety of local business owners just a bit if they know their customers appreciate all they have done for their community.

Such signs of help - and others that you can likely think of - are needed more than ever now. Please show your support.

*John Boynton is Torstar Corporation's president and chief executive officer.*

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2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## What you need to know to help you and your family stay healthy.

- Only visit an assessment centre if you have been referred by a health care professional.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Monitor for symptoms after travel.
- Avoid large gatherings.
- Be prepared, but avoid panic stocking.
- Caring for those who are ill? Take precautions.
- Clean high-touch surfaces regularly.
- Order your prescription medication.
- Practice cough and sneeze etiquette in transit.

**If you have symptoms,** take the self-assessment at [ontario.ca/coronavirus](http://ontario.ca/coronavirus). Or call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007) or your public health unit.

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