

Please continue to help us so we can care for you.

I would like to first say a heartfelt **thank-you** to all those who have tried so hard to stop the spread of COVID. Unfortunately, despite all our best efforts, the hospitals are now overwhelmed, and emergency services are running flat out transferring patients around the province. Even our rural hospital is filling with overflow patients from larger centres. Everyone connected to the health care system from the cleaners to the medical staff are feeling the strain, not to mention the stress for patients and families. Even when new COVID cases start to slow, hospital and ICU admissions will continue to rise for at least 2-4 weeks. Now, more than ever, we need your help to get through these next few weeks.

The most important thing you can do is to take care of yourself. Making health food choices, exercising regularly and maintaining a regular sleep cycle can all help keep you healthy. Get outside when you can but if possible, avoid or delay any activities that might put you at high risk for accidents or injuries. Take extra care with power tools, outdoor chores and unfamiliar activities. Monitor your mental health and limit your use alcohol, marijuana or other drugs. There are many mental health resources that you can access by phone or online if you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, depressed or struggling to cope.

If you develop any new or concerning medical problems, please call your regular doctor's office as soon as possible, unless it is an emergency. Your doctor is the best person to understand what is going on with **your** health and can **safely** arrange for you to be seen in person if needed. Please follow the advice of your health care provider, particularly for managing any chronic medical conditions. If your doctor advises you to go to Emergency or get other tests, please do so immediately, without arguing. Early treatment may prevent the need for hospital or ICU admission or other emergency services.

Help stop the spread of COVID by avoiding all non-essential indoor contact with anyone you do not live with. When not at home, wear a clean, well fitting, well-constructed mask indoors **at all times**. Avoid enclosed or crowded outdoor spaces. Anyplace without good airflow can increase COVID transmission even outside. If you have any symptoms of COVID, please call the local COVID assessment centre for an appointment. As well as COVID testing, there is a doctor available who can examine and determine if you need further treatment. If you think you might possibly have COVID or have been in contact with anyone with COVID – get tested, then stay home and self-isolate.

Remember that everyone on the health care team is essential right now and we need everyone to help keep us all mentally and physically healthy. Many of us have only had 1 vaccine dose, so we are still at risk of getting COVID and then not be able to work. Please be kind, be polite and be patient. Wear your mask and keep your distance as much as possible. Try not to raise your voice – not only is it intimidating, but it also increases the spread of COVID.

Lockdown isn't just about flattening the COVID curve, it's also about freeing up healthcare resources so that when you need help for any reason, we will be there for you.