



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

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Local health units announce regional approach to mandatory masks

Ottawa – Today Medical Officers of Health from Eastern Ontario Health Unit; Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit; Renfrew County and District Health Unit and Ottawa Public Health announced a regional approach to the use of masks in their respective jurisdictions.

Each public health unit will be invoking a directive under the province's [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#) that requires individuals to wear a mask or face covering in certain enclosed public spaces. Under the directive, the person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall operate the business or organization in compliance with the advice, recommendations and instructions of public health officials, including any advice, recommendations or instructions on physical distancing, cleaning or disinfecting.

In Renfrew County and District, this directive will require that masks are worn in enclosed public spaces. The details of the local directive are in development and will come into effect next week. RCDHU's first step for implementation of this directive is a gradual education process to be further assessed going forward. This directive is to be primarily used as a means to educate people on mask use in premises especially where 2-metre physical distancing cannot be maintained.

As the province continues to reopen and with increased community travel, physical distancing becomes more challenging. There is also an increased risk of potential spread of COVID-19, especially indoors or in confined spaces where there is minimal airflow, higher concentrations of people, and an increased chance of sharing high-touch surfaces.

Evidence shows that wearing a non-medical mask or face covering such as a bandana, scarf or cloth that covers the mouth and nose, can help contain the spread of COVID-19 when used in combination with frequent handwashing, physical distancing and staying home when ill. Masks that cover your mouth, nose, and chin help to prevent respiratory droplets from your mouth and nose reaching others or landing on surfaces. Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) states that "masks offer a non-invasive, inexpensive method for saving lives while providing a visual reminder to remain vigilant during these times of uncertainty."

For more information about masks and COVID-19 visit [RCDHU's website](#), view [RCDHU's Frequently Asked Questions – Masks and Face Coverings](#), or call RCDHU at 613-735-8654.

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