

Dear Lucan and surrounding community members,

We feel it is our responsibility as your local physicians to update you on the serious nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and what you can do to keep the community safe during this time.

COVID-19 is in a family of viruses known as “coronaviruses”. You may remember the SARS epidemic in 2003? ... SARS was a coronavirus.

COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan China on December 31st, 2019. Since then, it has spread throughout the world, known as a pandemic, which was declared by the World Health Organization on March 11th, 2020. This means that we have reached a point where we can no longer prevent the spread of COVID-19 --- it's here, and most of us will be infected at some point.

Why do we care about this virus? First of all, people can pass it on to others without even knowing they have it. This is why COVID-19 has spread so quickly around the globe.

From the data we are seeing from other countries, approximately 80% of people who get COVID-19 will have mild symptoms (cough, fever, runny nose, diarrhea). However, the other 20% will require hospital admission due to severe shortness of breath. About ¼ of those cases will need to go to the ICU and be intubated (which essentially is a tube down your throat to help you breath). It is being reported that anywhere from 1-3% of individuals with COVID-19 will die.

You may be thinking “Well I'm young and healthy, I'll be fine”. Sure, you might be... but what about the people you spread it to? Will they be fine too? Are you willing to risk that?

COVID-19 is here, and it's not going anywhere --- there's no vaccine, and there's no effective treatment at this point. This is very serious, and doctors are concerned. Not only is COVID-19 the only virus of it's kind to spread across the globe, it has the potential to collapse our healthcare system. We do not have enough hospital beds on a good day. Now imagine if thousands of people start coming in. Very sick people who need help breathing. In Italy, people are dying because there are not enough hospital beds. If we don't act now, we are looking at a similar situation here in Canada.

I know this sounds scary, but there are things you can do to help slow down the spread and give doctors, nurses and other health care workers a fighting chance to save those who become severely ill with COVID-19.

#1: Social Distancing - If you can, please stay at home. This is the ONLY means we have at this point to slow down the spread of COVID-19. This is the ONLY way our healthcare system has a fighting chance. If you must go out, avoid large crowds and try to keep your distance from others. If you have a non-urgent appointment coming up, cancel it. Ask your doctor if they can offer you a telephone visit instead of going into the office.

#2: Cancel all travel. If you have recently travelled outside of Canada, you MUST self-isolate for 14 days.

#3: If you feel sick: STAY HOME. If you go out, you will spread the virus to others.

#4: Go to the emergency room ONLY if you are having trouble breathing, or have a serious medical emergency. Otherwise, please STAY HOME.

#5: If you think you may have COVID-19, STAY HOME. Call your local health unit, and they will advise if you need to have testing done or go to the emergency room.

#6: Wash your hands.

PLEASE, do your part and follow these recommendations NOW.

Sincerely,

The Lucan Family Health Organization Physicians

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