

Community Update – September 9, 2020

Emerging Wisely Current State: Relaxing Phase 2 – Next Steps

Below are some key excerpts from Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, statement yesterday.

COVID-19 has not been taking a rest over the long weekend. There have been 131,895 cases of COVID-19 reported in Canada, including 9,145 deaths. 88.2% of people have now recovered. Over the past week, close to 46,000 people were tested daily, with 0.9% of people testing positive. An average of 545 new cases have been reported daily during the most recent seven days.

This summer, Canadians by-and-large followed public health guidance and as a result, nationally, Canada has been able to keep COVID-19 under manageable control, allowing us to carefully resume activities that are important to our social and economic wellbeing. With this said, the average daily case count has been increasing in recent weeks. This is a concern and a reminder that we all need to maintain public health measures to keep COVID-19 on the slow-burn path that we need.

As we enter the fall, Canadians will need to be even more vigilant about following public health guidance, particularly as the cold weather shifts activities indoors. In addition to the colder weather, the fall brings holidays and traditional family gatherings for many Canadians. While I know we are all eager to gather with our extended family and friends for the holidays, indoor gatherings may not be right for every Canadian or every family.

Before you decide to attend an event or activity, remember to ask yourself some quick-check questions about your personal risk factors and the setting of the event or activity.

First, ask yourself two questions about your personal risk, and that of your household or contact bubble:

1. Are you at high risk of developing serious complications if you become infected **or** if you would have to self-isolate, would this seriously disrupt your upcoming plans, priorities and responsibilities?
2. Are there people at high risk of developing serious complications of COVID-19 in your household or in-person contact bubble that you could unintentionally infect?

Then ask yourself two questions about the location of the event:

1. Has the host made changes to the location to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, including making it easy to maintain a 2-metre physical distance from others while indoors and requiring people to wear face masks?
2. Are you able to adjust your plan at the event or activity, for example by stepping away if it gets crowded, wearing a mask and Finally, know there are things you can do before you go to an event that can reduce your risk of getting infected and spreading the virus to your loved ones:
 - **If you have any symptoms, even mild ones, stay home, stay away from others, and get tested;**
 - **Keep up with effective public health practices** like physical distancing, hand washing and wearing a mask or face covering; and
 - **Limit the number of locations and social gatherings you attend** in the days and weeks before a planned important event to reduce the risk of spread during the event.

Taking these precautions will provide layers of protection to keep you and those you care about safe, while helping to keep COVID-19 on the slow burn in Canada.”