

COVID-19

Messaging for Youth

With everything going on with the coronavirus, things might be a bit stressful. Things will get better. Until then, there are things you can do at home to help.

Be careful what you read

Coronavirus or "COVID-19" is the new buzzword. It's everywhere. In fact, there's so much information about the virus on social media, it's hard to know what is true. Look at the sources and who is sending it. There's lots of good info from experts like the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), the [World Health Organization](#), [Public Health Ontario](#), and right here on [Lambton Public Health](#).

Take care of yourself

Your most important job is to take care of yourself, your health and wellness.

Of course you need to wash your hands often and keep at least a 2-metre buffer between yourself and others, but you also need to keep yourself mentally healthy. Right now, you may feel frustrated, and/or lost because your routines, normal activities and familiar spaces have been tossed upside down. No events, programs, activities, and even hanging with friends is off-limits for the near future.

It is OK to feel these emotions, but remember, it's temporary.

If you've never practiced mindfulness and meditation to help calm and centre yourself now is a good time to try by downloading apps like [Calm](#) and [Headspace](#). Feeling anxious? Try [Mindshift](#), a scientifically-backed cognitive behavioural therapy app.

Exercise is a great way to improve blood flow and boost your brain with positive thoughts. Online instructors can give you a workout using things around the house.

As the weather gets nicer, get outside and explore your backyard; sunshine helps us feel good.

If you need to talk with someone, here's a few resources:

- [The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#) (under 20)
- [Good2Talk](#) (ages 17-25)

Other telephone resources:

- Crisis Services Canada: 1-833-456-4566 or text 45645
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 Text CONNECT to 686868
- First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line: 1-855-242-3310
- Native Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-877-209-1266

Talk to your buddies - connection happens in many different forms

"Social distancing" doesn't mean your social life is over. What it really means is that we need to keep some physical space - 2 metres - between friends.

While we can't physically sit next to each other, our social lives can still be fun, vibrant, and close-knit. Come up with creative ways to talk and interact with each other. Most of us have access to some type of communication device, like cell phone or computers.

Gaming communities are popping up like Minecraft or Esports to stay connected. Make new memories with friends while doing something you enjoy, something interactive and creative, like a virtual coffee date with your friends on Zoom, Facetime, or Skype.

...more

With hundreds of social media apps, you can stay connected. Message each other, play video games with one another. Believe it or not, your cell phone is for more than texting. It's great to hear your friend's voice and to reach out if you need them. It is important now than ever to connect with your friends.

Create space to connect at home

Doing the same stuff in the same space at home can become stale and boring. Utilize the space available to keep entertained. Redecorate your room to make it "fresh." Try a different room?

Take a break from social media

Social media is great, but it can be overwhelming. Why not watch a movie with your friends. [Netflix has a new party](#) extension on Google Chrome that allows you to watch the same movie with your friends, starting, pausing, and stopping all together.

Use social media to plan and create spaces just for you and your friends.

Focus on what YOU can control

With the exception of washing your hands and limiting physical interaction, there's not much *you* can do about what's happening outside your door. Focus on what *you* can control, what you can do. Maybe you've been wanting to read more but couldn't because you were busy with school, sports, or after-school job. [Here's a free book website to get started.](#)

Maybe there's an art project you wanted to do, or a skill you wanted to learn. Youtube is a great place to start. Websites like [skillshare](#) help you learn something new. Focus on *you* and what *you* can control.

FAQs For Teens

Why should I have to sit at home? Doesn't this virus only affect old people?

While older people and those who have health problems are at greatest risk, Young people aren't as "immune" as we thought. The

World Health Organization [recently warned young people against complacency during this pandemic](#), because they can also be infected.

While young people may not be getting as sick, they can still carry the virus and spread it to at-risk people around them. That's why social distancing is important. It keeps your parents, grandparents, loved ones and other high-risk individuals in the community safe.

What caused the new coronavirus?

The exact cause is still under investigation. The thought is, like many other coronaviruses like SARS and MERS, it came [from an animal and passed on to humans](#). COVID-19 is thought to have come from an animal sold at a live animal market in China.

What makes this virus so different is that it is a unique strain that has never circulated in the human population before. This means we have no immunity against the virus and that's why it is spreading so quickly.

Why is this happening now?

This is not the first time there has been a wide-spread virus. In 2003, Canada had an [outbreak of SARS](#) (severe acute respiratory syndrome). We believe it started the same way as COVID-19. Doctors and health professionals eventually contained the virus. They are trying to do the same with the COVID-19. You and your family can do your part by following [physical distance protocols](#) and not traveling unless it's an emergency.

Since information is shared more quickly and easily more than ever, we need to be mindful about the accuracy of this information. Limit your exposure to social media. Check out official sources like the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#), the [World Health Organization](#), [Public Health Ontario](#), and [Lambton Public Health](#).

...more

Can our pets get sick?

While we think the virus originated from animals, there is little evidence that domesticated cats and dogs can get sick, and even less for non-mammal species. And don't worry, it doesn't seem like they can spread the virus either.

Can you die from the new coronavirus?

Most people who were sick have recovered, however people have died. Some people are at greater risk to get seriously ill than others.

Recent data suggests that young people are helping to spread the disease further because they may carry the virus without showing any symptoms and do not adhere to proper social distancing protocols and procedures putting others at risk. Practicing social distancing and proper hand-washing procedures can help prevent further spread of the virus and can help get things get back to normal faster.

School is closed because of the coronavirus, when will it open? If it stays closed, how will I graduate?

The [Ontario government](#) is working with school boards to ensure education can continue. Follow their announcements for the most up-to-date information.

How do I know if I am sick?

[Link symptoms from PHAC website](#)

How long is it going to be before this goes away?

Public health officials and health-care professionals are working to decrease the impact of the virus. Right now, we can't say how long or how big of an impact it is going to have. Regardless of if and when a cure is found, the sooner more of us follow social distance protocols, the faster and easier it will be to deal with it and the less impact it will have.