

March 13, 2020

Media Release

Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) activating pandemic plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Lake of the Woods District Hospital is activating its pandemic plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of patients, their families, staff, professional staff, and volunteers is our utmost priority. The plan is in place for the safety of our community.

Preparedness efforts at the Hospital began long before COVID-19 appeared in Canada based on lessons-learned during other epidemics. Our experiences in the past with SARS in 2003, pandemic H1N1 in 2009 and Ebola in 2012 have taught us to plan early and anticipate escalation.

Although precautions are being taken, the risk of Ontarians contracting COVID-19 remains low. However, our Hospital has taken the following actions and continuously adapts to the evolving situation.

Incident Management Team

An Incident Management Team has been established to plan, implement and monitor COVID-19 activity specific to our Hospital.

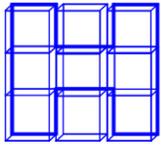
Visitor Restrictions

To help prevent the risk or spread of COVID-19, visitors will be restricted at the Hospital, effective Saturday March 14th at 8:00 a.m. and until further notice. One care partner is welcome during regular visiting hours. A care partner supports and participates in the care of the patient and is a valuable member of the care team.

Limited exceptions to the number of care partners permitted may apply to end of life patients, as well as other extenuating circumstances. Any exceptions are to be determined by the unit manager or delegate.

COVID-19 Screening

Screening for COVID-19 is taking place for all inpatient and outpatient departments. Screening for visitors will occur at the Emergency entrance and will be in effect as of 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 14th. Screening will follow Ministry of Health guidelines and will involve answering questions related to COVID-19 symptoms, as well as recent travel history. All people will be screened before being allowed in.



LAKE OF THE WOODS DISTRICT HOSPITAL

COVID-19 Assessment Centre

The Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH), in collaboration with the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU), is in the process of establishing a COVID-19 Assessment Centre. Your health and safety is our top priority. The Assessment Centre is intended to enhance the protection of all patients, staff and community members.

The Assessment Centre will be located in the hospital's main lobby. Because the Assessment Centre is a separate space, it should reduce the risk of infection spread and ease pressure on the Emergency Department. This location is temporary and will be relocated in the coming weeks. Updates will be provided as the situation develops.

To protect yourself and others from illness causing germs, please ensure you follow these everyday precautions:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
- Practice proper respiratory etiquette (covering your nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing);
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth;
- Avoid contact with people who are ill;
- Stay home if you are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness;
- It is recommended to get your flu shot if you haven't already as the flu virus is still circulating in the community;
- Seek medical care if required and disclose any recent travel history.

Additional measures may be implemented depending on how the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. We are committed to inform the community accordingly.

Please continue to contact the Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) for more information regarding COVID-19 screening at 468-3147. More information is also available at: <https://www.nwhu.on.ca/Pages/coronavirus.aspx>

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