



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Households can Expand their Social Circles as Peterborough Enters Phase 2 of COVID-19 Recovery

How the number “10” fits into Ontario’s Public Health Measures

Just as Peterborough launches into Phase 2 of the recovery plan, Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health has announced that households can expand their social circles to include up to 10 family members or friends. What does this mean? It means that social circles can eat together on a patio or play a game of soccer, as long as physical distancing with everyone outside of the circle continues.

“Social circles have been allowed in other provinces as a way to allow for more close contact among a small and mutually exclusive group. This is a much welcomed development in Ontario.” said Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health. “Not everyone may choose to be part of a social circle, but once formed, they can provide a layer of safety as long as other protective measures such as hand washing, physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and wearing a mask continue. High risk individuals may decide to continue to self-isolate as the best way to ensure they are protected.”

The number “ten” now applies to both the social circles, who can enjoy close contact, as well as to the maximum number of people who can gather, with physical distancing measures, under the current provincial emergency directives. It is important to keep at least two metres away from others outside your household or social circle, if you decide on joining one. “But we can only be part of one social circle – that’s an important part of how the circles are meant to work,” adds Dr. Salvaterra. A [step by step guide](#) has been released today as well by the Ministry of Health.

Julie Ingram, Manager of Environmental Health advises that anyone in Peterborough planning to access a newly opened patio call ahead to make a reservation. “If you are intending to visit a local patio or attend a service at your place of worship, only you and your household or social circle contacts are allowed to be close; you must physically distance yourself from anyone outside of your household or circle by maintaining at least 2 metres (6 feet). This will be valuable information as businesses, patios and churches have limited capacity and must carefully plan how to accommodate you.”

Restaurants and bars are required to take reservations for outdoor eating areas. Personal service settings (such as salons) have been encouraged to book appointments ahead of time, to allow for screening. Keeping ill or at risk clients at home is an important way to protect workers who must get close in order to provide a service.

“Don’t expect to receive service as a “walk-in” client,” warns Ingram. “Retail stores must continue to limit the number of people in the establishment at one time and some are also using reserved shopping times.” More safe shopping guidance can be [found here](#).

If you’re a business owner/operator looking for public health guidance to prepare for Phase 2, your first step is to review the [resources](#) provided by the Ontario government. There are more than 100 sector-specific guidance documents. More information is available for workplaces and retail businesses on our [webpage](#), including recordings of webinars that Peterborough Public Health has hosted for campgrounds and trailer parks, as well as for outdoor eating spaces. After reviewing existing resources, if you continue to have questions, please contact our office. Please note that we are receiving a high volume of calls, which are being triaged and responded to as soon as possible.

Tobacco Enforcement Officers and Public Health Inspectors will be active this weekend to monitor the compliance with public health measures and the Smoke-Free Ontario Act of outdoor eating areas and provide education to business owners and operators.

Our community has been strong through our COVID-19 response and we need to continue to stay vigilant to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

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For further information, please contact:

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