



Northwestern
Health Unit

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MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

UK Variant found in workplace outbreak in Dryden

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) has been notified that a COVID-19 variant of concern has been identified in a case related to the outbreak at Walmart in Dryden. Variants of concern spread more easily, faster, and can result in more hospitalizations and deaths than the non-variant form of COVID-19.

There are now known VOC cases related to both the high school and the workplace outbreak and the COVID-19 virus is believed to be spreading within the community across a wide range of age groups. It is important to note that the Walmart cases were infectious at work many weeks ago, and avoiding the store now does not offer protection. It is likely that people who do not know they have COVID-19 are currently spreading it throughout the community. NWHU urges anyone with even one symptom of COVID-19 to isolate, get tested, and remain isolated until you have a test result - even if you think it's "just a cold".

This news has implications for all residents in the area, "with the long weekend approaching, it is imperative that the public does not gather with anyone who they do not live with, and does not travel, even within the region unless it is for an essential purpose" says Dr. Young Hoon. She continues, "the best way to prevent COVID-19 continues to be staying 2 metres from anyone you do not live with, washing your hands regularly, wearing a mask when in enclosed public spaces, and avoiding touching your face".

NWHU warns that gatherings over the weekend could lead to dire outcomes for the community. "By gathering with others without physical distancing, you are putting yourself and your friends and family at risk of death and also contributing to more strict measures being put in place," warns Dr. Young Hoon.

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