

MEDIA RELEASE



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Health Unit issues workplace-specific Instructions

In response to a concerning trend in the region, Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) has issued Instructions from the Medical Officer of Health (MOH) specific to workplaces under the Reopening Ontario Act. "We have seen an increase in the number of workplace-related COVID-19 cases and outbreaks in our area over the past few weeks. Upon investigation, we have learned that some individuals are attending work with symptoms of COVID-19," says Dr. Kit Young Hoon, MOH at NWHU.

The Instructions come into effect May 13, 2021 and outline the requirements for owners and operators of workplaces. "In addition to the Instructions, to protect the safety of staff and patrons in local workplaces, NWHU will issue fines to workplaces that allow employees to attend work while symptomatic or while they should be self-isolating," explains Dr. Young Hoon.

NWHU believes that most workplaces in our area have taken prevention measures seriously and should be commended for their dedication to keep staff and patrons safe. "Unfortunately workplaces not following public health recommendations are contributing to increasing COVID-19 rates in the region. Increasing rates can lengthen the time that current public health restrictions are applied," says Dr. Young Hoon.

All employees must pass a COVID-19 screen before entering the workplace. If anyone has even one symptom of COVID-19, they should stay home from work, self-isolate, and get tested. NWHU acknowledges that some individuals may struggle financially if they cannot work. Dr. Young Hoon urges workplaces to support employees as much as possible during these times, "When employees are supported, it reduces the chance of COVID-19 spreading in your workplace and increases the likelihood that your workplace can remain open. It is a good investment".

More information about the Instructions can be found on the NWHU website at <https://www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19/Pages/WorkplaceInstructions.aspx>

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