

CEDAR SPRINGS COMMUNITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Questions and Answers for our Members

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Dear Springers!

Life at Cedar Springs is anything but “normal”. Our playground and ball courts are sealed off with tape. Golfing is prohibited. We must keep a distance of at least 2 meters from anyone who does not live in our own household, refrain from visiting neighbors, friends and family, and generally stay at home as much as possible.

These measures are necessary but burdensome. Therefore, members want to know:

Question: When will life at Cedar Springs return to normal?

A few facts:

- SARS-CoV-2 is very contagious. In a society without any life-style restrictions, a person who carries the virus infects on average between 2 and 2.5 other people (Reproduction Number R0 of 2.0 to 2.5). Over 40% of those who spread the disease do not have *any* symptoms at the time of the virus transmission.
- COVID-19 - the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 - can be life-threatening and deadly for anyone, but it is especially dangerous for people with certain risk factors. Age is a definite disadvantage: Severity of illness and mortality both increase steadily over the age of 60. Other risk factors include obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure and other cardiovascular illnesses, kidney disease, conditions and drugs that affect the immune system, and male gender.
- Current data suggest that fewer than 5% of the general population have been infected during the first wave of this pandemic in Western societies. This means that the vast majority of our populations remains at risk of infection.
- Some governments outside of Canada are beginning to reverse their lock-down or “shelter in place” orders. Countries that are guided by scientific evidence before lifting some restrictions have reduced their R0 below 1. This means that a person who carries the virus infects on average fewer than one other person.
- A reproduction number below 1 does not mean, however, that the virus has been eradicated! SARS-CoV-2 still circulates among the population and the spread will quickly increase if restrictions are lifted too fast.

Answer:

Nobody can predict with certainty what life will be like this summer at Cedar Springs.

But we are certain that life will be unlike our past seasons. Here is why:

- Our local, provincial and federal governments must ensure that the infection is “controlled”. Nobody wants to see new waves of “uncontrolled” infection that resemble those we have all witnessed from afar in places like Wuhan, Northern Italy, Spain, the UK and New York.
- Control measures should include large-scale testing for the virus; rigorous tracing and quarantine of cases and contacts by public health authorities; and continued physical distancing while business and recreational activities resume.
- In Cedar Springs, therefore, important and reasonable measures of physical distancing will likely remain the rule throughout this summer and fall. These measures should include frequent handwashing, keeping a distance of at least 2 meters between ourselves and others, and - possibly - mandatory wearing of face masks in shared public places.
- Most experts agree that such measures of physical distancing can only be lifted once a safe and effective vaccine becomes available.
- Our vulnerable members must be protected! There are many seniors among our neighbors. By responsibly and strictly following all rules, we are not just protecting ourselves and our own family, but also our neighbors and friends.

This week, in an interview with CNN, Michael Osterholm, a prominent infectious disease specialist in the US, summed up our present stage in the life of this pandemic:

“You might say we’re in the second inning of a nine-inning game”.

Further Reading:

I. 'The way down is much slower than the way up'

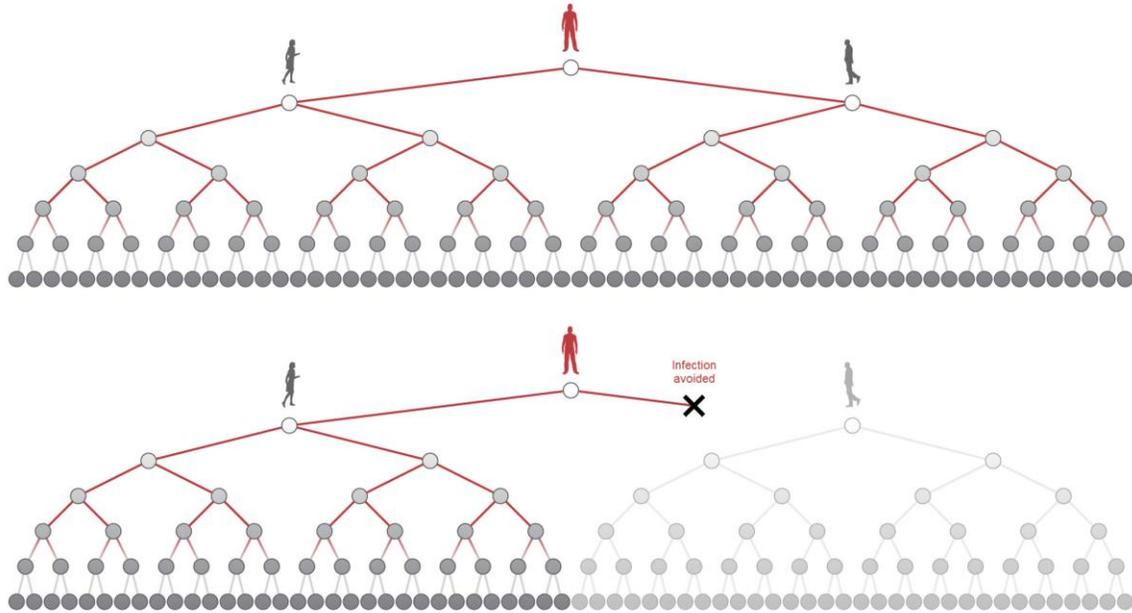
WHO announces 6 criteria countries need to meet before lifting lockdown restrictions:

1. Transmission is controlled;
2. Health system capacities are in place to test, isolate, and treat every case and trace every contact;
3. Outbreak risks are minimized in special settings like health facilities and nursing homes;
4. Preventive measures are in place in workplaces, schools, and other essential places;
5. Importation risks can be managed;
6. Communities are fully educated, engaged and empowered to adjust to the new norm.

<https://www.businessinsider.com/when-can-countries-lift-stay-at-home-restrictions-according-who-2020-4>

II. This figure was published in the New York Times and illustrates the exponential spread of the virus at an R0 of 2.0

Coronavirus Chain of Transmission
Without and with limiting social contacts



<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/26/learning/whats-going-on-in-this-graph-coronavirus-protective-measures.html>

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