



Statement from the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team on lifting community COVID-19 public health measures, including masking requirements

The Simcoe-Muskoka District Health Unit reports that our community is now in another wave of COVID-19. There are increased infections, hospitalizations, and outbreaks.¹

Because of this, the South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team (SGB OHT) is asking each of you to continue to take precautions against COVID-19 despite the lifting of public health measures, including wearing masks in public places. The SGB OHT is made up of local health professionals, organizations, and community members who are concerned about the increase in community transmission of COVID-19.

Prevent the Spread

In our community, the spread of COVID-19 has created health and human resource challenges in health and social care settings.

There are, however, things we can do to reduce the spread and protect ourselves, our loved ones, our most vulnerable community members, and our health system.

To protect yourself, we ask you to:

- Stay up to date with your [COVID-19 vaccinations](#), including booster doses. Vaccines are safe, and they work. This is the best prevention against serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19;
- Wear a **mask**, especially when indoors and when physical distancing is not possible;
- Reduce the number of people you come into **contact** with, especially indoors;
- Continue to follow **hygiene practices** such as covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze and frequent handwashing;
- Stay **home** when you are sick or [symptomatic](#); and
- Wear a high-quality mask.²

To book a COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the [Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website](#), or contact your family doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist.

High-quality masks reduce transmission of COVID-19

We recommend wearing a mask, especially when indoors and when physical distancing is not possible. Doing this protects yourself and our vulnerable community members and is an important added layer of protection against COVID-19.

Choosing the Right Mask

When choosing a mask, use one that:

- Fits snugly against the sides of your face;
- Covers your nose, mouth, and chin; and
- Moves air through the mask and not around it.³

It's important to remember that following these steps is something we can all do. This pandemic is not over yet. Join us in continuing to wear a mask and following public health measures. Please continue to be kind, respect one another, and work together as a community to keep one another safe.

In appreciation,

Your South Georgian Bay Ontario Health Team

¹ Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (2022). Indoor Masking Requirements and Other Layers of Protection, <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-/Return-to-school/220413-smdhu-letter-masking-recommendations.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

² Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (2022). COVID-19, Protect Yourself and Others, <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19#b6072a60-b91e-4df5-8d91-63624e9f24ea#214e17bd-d220-47a4-b657-d5caf02ef7e4>

³ Government of Canada (2022). COVID-19 mask use: Advice for community settings, <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>

“We strive to be the healthiest community in Canada.”