

Response to TPH Preparations for 2024-2025 Respiratory Virus Season

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Why won't Toronto Public Health emphasize indoor air quality?

Since 2020, experts have been telling us that improvements to indoor air quality are central to addressing transmission of airborne viruses such as Covid-19.

However, the Toronto Public Health report has no practical advice to address indoor air quality in schools and other congregate settings.

The TPH report places all responsibility on individual action (getting vaccinated, wearing a mask, washing hands) instead of facilities and systems.

Clean Air In Classrooms Using W.A.T.C.H.

Windows

- Open windows as much as possible.
- If it's cold outside, even cracking windows slightly can help.
- Keeping the classroom door open helps circulate the air even more.
- Warm weather? Having 2 windows open while using a fan to blow air out of 1 of the windows is optimal.

Air Movement

Check to see if you feel air coming from the diffusers or air vents.

Attach a ribbon to the vent for an easy visual cue that it's working!

Thermostat

Keep the **FAN** setting **ON** when the room is being **occupied**.

AUTO is ok to use when the room is going to be **unoccupied**.

CO2 Levels

Use a CO2 monitor with a nondispersive infrared (NDIR) sensor

< 600 ppm	Very Good
600 - 800 ppm	Good
800 - 1000 ppm	Acceptable
1000 - 1500 ppm	Poor
> 1500 PPM	Very Poor

* HEPA filters do not change CO2 levels.

HEPA Filter or Corsi-Rosenthal Box

Use the highest setting.

- * Noise permitting.

Disable Features like:

- Ionization
- Plasma
- UV with Catalyst
- Auto

PLACEMENT IS IMPORTANT

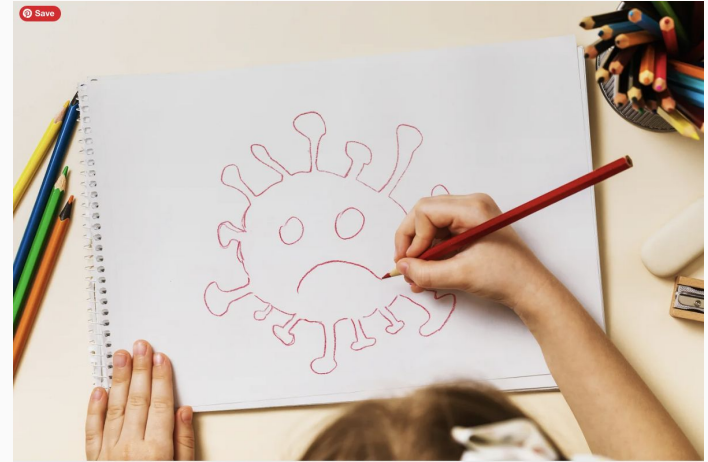
- Move away from walls & corners. (0.5 m - 1.5 ft)
- Place as close as you can to the centre of the room.
- Avoid blowing directly at anyone.
- Face away from walls & obstructions, e.g. blowing under a table.
- Raised is better than on the floor.
- Keep away from clean air sources open windows, air vents & other HEPA filters.
- If you have multiple HEPA filters, space them out evenly.

For more information please visit: itsairborne.com
Infographic: agcreative.org

Children pay a price for our silence

Children are paying a price for this silence. Scientific American just published an article titled, “[Long Covid Is Harming Too Many Kids](#)”. It says:

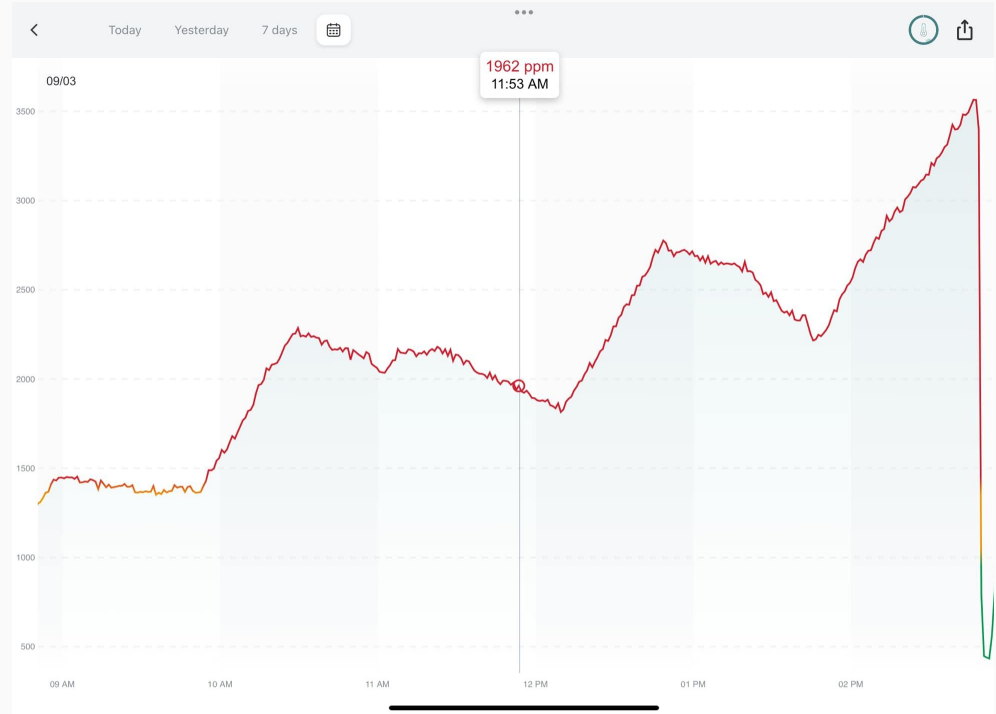
“When you...estimate that 10 to 20 percent of infected kids may experience long-term symptoms, that many of the most common symptoms affect cognition, energy levels and behaviour, and that children are being periodically reinfected, you have a scientific rationale to partly explain children’s widely reported behavioural and learning [challenges](#).”



Schools must take air quality seriously

School administrators do not believe they have a responsibility to reduce airborne transmission in schools. They routinely ignore air quality concerns. These concerns include alarming indoor air quality readings obtained from poorly ventilated spaces; unplugged air cleaners used as side tables; and children packed in gyms instead of being sent to eat lunch outside.



Air quality will not be taken seriously until public health agencies emphasize indoor air quality in public advice.



MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions: TPH isn't emphasizing indoor air quality

MAP is Canada's largest research centre focused on health equity and the social determinants of health.

In September 2021, MAP published a report titled, "[Does Toronto Public Health emphasize indoor air quality in its public COVID-19 advice to congregate settings?](#)" The report said TPH was not emphasizing indoor air quality in its public COVID-19 advice to congregate settings.



Rapid review: does Toronto Public Health emphasize indoor air quality in its public COVID-19 advice to congregate settings?

Publication information

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MAP asked PHO and TPH to take “urgently and publicly” take these actions

1. Build capacity and retain permanent expertise related to indoor air quality.
2. Include metrics related to indoor air quality in all facility appraisals and inspections.
3. Inform congregate settings in Toronto and province-wide that improvements to indoor air quality are key infection prevention and control measures for COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.
4. Update all guidance to reflect the above and place caveats on outdated guidance.
5. Ensure that individual guidance documents are clear, accessible and comprehensive—our review revealed a maze of lists, hyperlinks and web pages, many of which led to outdated resources.
6. Ensure that all congregate settings receive and implement updated guidance. This includes providing practical support to congregate settings to address indoor air quality and establishing evidence-based occupancy levels on an emergency basis.
7. Ensure that guidance aimed at congregate settings in Ontario, including Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) training, emphasizes the importance of engineering controls, and builds capacity to implement these controls. At present, public COVID-19 guidance for congregate settings in Ontario largely places responsibility for infection prevention and control onto individual workers instead of onto facilities and systems.