

# Changes to Isolation of Library Materials

As of Thursday, Feb 18, Kitchener Public Library will be moving to a **24 hour isolation period for returned library items**. Neighbouring libraries including WPL, Idea Exchange, ROWLibraries and Guelph Public Library will also be transitioning to a 24 hour isolation period.

## Why?

We continue to use an evidence-based approach to inform decisions around our services and safety protocols. According to the latest scientific evidence, the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus through inanimate surfaces (such as library materials) is very unlikely.

Evidence now shows that the [primary way that COVID-19 spreads](#) is from person to person, and that the risk of transmitting the COVID-19 virus through inanimate surfaces, such as library materials, is highly unlikely.

As a precautionary measure, the Government of Ontario still requires a period of quarantine, so libraries across Ontario are moving to a 24-hour period of isolation for returned library materials.

## What about research, especially the [REALM study](#), that shows that the virus can survive on library materials for long periods of time?

REALM tested large amounts of the virus on different types of surfaces in a controlled situation. While virus particles are detectable on surfaces after periods of time, transmission is unlikely to occur in real-life conditions.

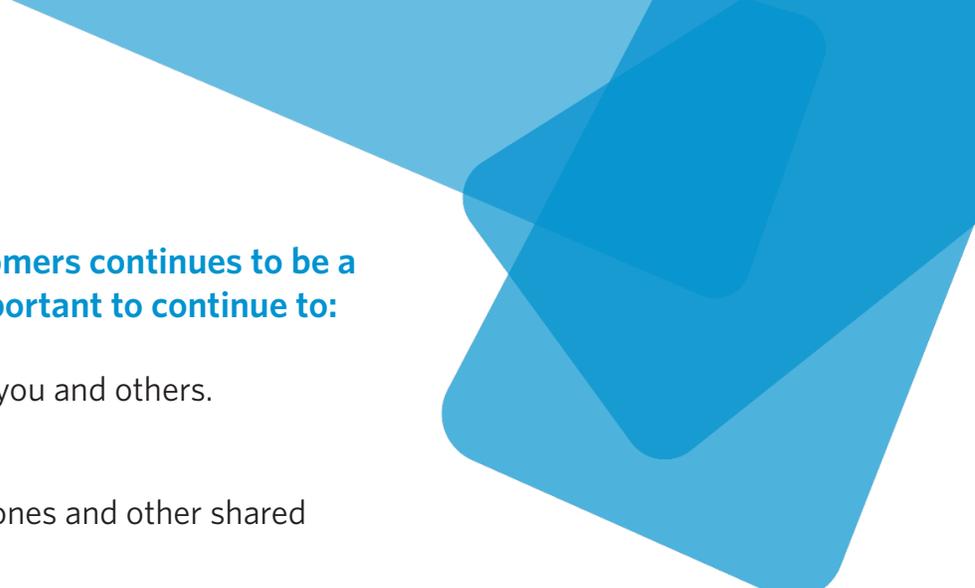
## How does this change benefit customers?

In addition to being aligned with the latest scientific evidence, this change will also benefit customers:

- With a shorter period of isolation, wait time for holds will decrease.
- As items are checked in sooner, customers will have a more accurate list of what they have checked out in their library account.

## What options do customers have if they are concerned about this change?

Customers can decide to isolate items at home before using them. They may also decide to use the library's vast [digital resources](#).



**Health and safety of staff and customers continues to be a priority for KPL. Therefore, it is important to continue to:**

- Maintain 6 feet/2 metres between you and others.
- Wear a mask.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Continue to sanitize computers, phones and other shared equipment.

**Additional Resources:**

- ["Hygiene Theater is still a huge waste of time"](#)  
in THEATLANTIC.com, *February 8, 2021*
- ["COVID-19 Rarely spreads through surfaces. So why are we still deep cleaning?"](#)  
In NATURE.com, *January 21, 2021*
- ["It's Time to Talk About Covid-19 and Surfaces Again"](#)  
in WIRED.com, *October 28, 2020*
- ["Exaggerated risk of transmission of COVID-19 by fomites"](#)  
in THELANCET.com, *July 3, 2020*