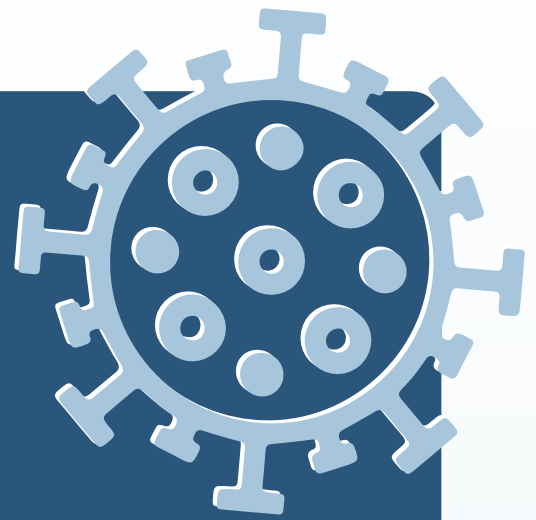


Coronavirus

(COVID-19)



A Northern Health guide for your community

These are uncertain times and many Northerners are feeling anxious or worried. As your health authority, we wanted to let you know what we're doing to prepare for the COVID-19 outbreak.

We also want to talk about the vital role that we all have in preventing infection and slowing the spread, so we can all stay as safe as possible.

This document will be updated as new information becomes available.

NH Communications - Version 1 - March 27, 2020



northern health
the northern way of caring

About Coronavirus (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus/COVID-19?

A new coronavirus has caused an outbreak of respiratory illness known as COVID-19. Many of the characteristics of COVID-19 are still unknown, but mild to severe illness has been reported for confirmed cases.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to those of other respiratory infections, including the flu. COVID-19 symptoms can include some or all of the following:

- Cough
- Fever
- Breathing difficulties
- Headache
- Generalized muscle pain
- Sore throat

Some people with the infection will have mild symptoms, or none at all, but they can still spread the virus to others – who might develop more severe symptoms.

How serious is it?

About 81% of cases are mild, and 19% are serious. “Serious” means the person has to go into hospital.

Of those 19%, 5% need intensive care and ventilator support (a machine to take over breathing for the patient while their body fights the virus).

The death rate is 1%, but this is higher in areas where the health care system is overwhelmed.

This is not like the flu. This is much more serious.

Who is most at risk of severe illness?

People of all ages can be infected by the new coronavirus. People over 70, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease) are more likely to be severely ill.

What is the risk in pregnancy?

Based on the evidence we have so far, pregnant women are no more likely to get COVID-19 than the general population.

In some women, pregnancy changes how your body responds to severe viral infections. This is something midwives and obstetricians have known for many years and are used to dealing with.

Currently, there is no evidence that pregnant women who get this infection are more at risk of serious complications than any other healthy individuals, but the amount of evidence available is quite limited, so if you're pregnant, please take extra care.

For more information, check www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/pregnancy

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads mainly through tiny drops of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

This means it's very important to cough or sneeze into your elbow, or into a tissue.

How can I avoid getting and spreading the virus?

1

Practice physical distancing

Practice physical distancing. Physical distancing saves lives by reducing the chance you will become infected. It also slows the spread of infection over a longer period of time, so Northern Health has a better chance of keeping up. It's everyone's responsibility to practice social distancing, whether you have symptoms or not.

- a. Avoid close contact with other people.** Keep at least 2 meters (6 feet) away from them.
- b. Avoid public transport** – buses, taxis, ride-sharing.
- c. Work from home** – speak to your employer about this.
- d. Avoid social activities** such as going to cafes, pubs, restaurants, or movie theaters.
- e. Avoid events** with groups of more than 50 people.
- f. Avoid going on children's playdates**, such as going to a playground or park.
- g. Don't have visitors to your home.** This includes friends and family (other than the family members you live with).

h. Don't go to your doctor's office without phoning ahead.

i. If you have questions, call your family doctor or nurse practitioner.

2

Wash your hands often

- a.** Wash your hands often with soap and water– for at least 20 seconds.
- b.** Always wash your hands when you get home or arrive at work.

3

Use hand sanitizer

If soap and water are unavailable, use hand sanitizer.

4

Use coughing etiquette

- a.** Cough or sneeze into your elbow, or into a tissue.
- b.** Put used tissues in the garbage immediately, and then wash your hands.

5

Avoid touching your face

Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, or mouth.

Stay Healthy!



Help stop the spread of germs. Protect yourself and others.



Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to dry your hands.

Avoid touching your face. Viruses can live on your hands for up to 5 minutes and on hard surfaces for up to 2 days.



Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Remember to wash and dry your hands after coughing or sneezing.

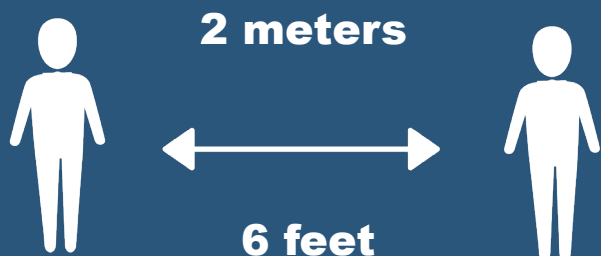
If you use a tissue, dispose of it as soon as possible, then wash your hands.



Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: 1-844-645-7811
BC Govt. COVID-19 Helpline: 1-888-COVID19 or 1-888-268-4319

Tips for physical distancing

We're asking you to avoid physical contact with people outside your home, including those you love and enjoy spending time with.



We know this will be difficult, especially for people who are already isolated. Some tips:

- Use technology to connect remotely.
- Setting elderly family members up with technology to allow for video calls can be a big help.
- Ask your elderly or vulnerable family members, neighbours, and friends if you can drop groceries off (on their front porch) for them.
- Neighbourhood Facebook or WhatsApp groups can help people connect and look after each other.
- Check out the cards at the end of this booklet. If you like, leave some on the front steps of houses along your street to offer help to those who are staying at home.

How long will we need to be physically distant?

We all need to follow the recommendations of our public health officer, health authorities, and government. Right now, it's everyone's responsibility to slow the spread.

We don't know the timeline yet, but you can count on Northern Health to keep you informed.

What should I do if I develop symptoms of COVID-19?

1. Self-isolate. This means you need to stay at home if you have any of the following:

- a. A fever.** If you don't have a thermometer, you might feel hot to touch on your chest or back.
- b. A new, continuous, dry cough.** This means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).

c. Difficulty breathing

d. A sore throat

2. People who live with you also need to self-isolate (see guidelines in the section on the next page called “**How long should I self-isolate for?**”).

3. Call the Northern Health COVID-19 online clinic and information line at 1-844-645-7811. It's run by nurses, doctors, and nurse practitioners – they will help you decide if you need to be tested.

4. Don't go to see your family doctor or nurse practitioner, pharmacist, or emergency department. Instead of going in person, call your family doctor or nurse practitioner.

How long should I self-isolate for?

1. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you need to stay home for **10 days**.
2. If you're returning from travel, you need to self-isolate for **14 days** (even if you don't have symptoms).
3. If you live with someone who has symptoms, you need to stay home for **10 days** from the day the first person in the home started having symptoms.
 - a. If you also develop symptoms, you need to stay home for **10 days** from the day your symptoms began.
4. After 10 days, if your temperature is normal and you feel better, you can return to your routine activities. You might still have a dry cough, but that's OK. Your cough might last for a few weeks, but if you just have a cough (and no other symptoms), it's OK to stop self-isolating after 10 days.

If you have symptoms and you live with someone who is 70 or older, has a long-term health condition, is pregnant, or has a weakened immune system, try to find somewhere else for them to stay for 10 days.

If you have to stay home together, try to keep away from each other as much as possible.

Treatment for COVID-19

There is currently no treatment for COVID-19. Antibiotics don't work against viruses, only against bacteria.

- COVID-19 is caused by a virus, so taking antibiotics won't stop you from getting it.
- As well, taking antibiotics won't help you get better if you have COVID-19.
- However, if you're hospitalized for COVID-19, you might be given antibiotics because bacterial co-infection is possible.

If you have any of the symptoms of COVID-19, you need to stay home (along with all other members of your household) for 10 days after your symptoms begin.

What's the difference between self-isolation and physical distancing?



Self-isolation:

avoiding situations where you could infect other people. People at high-risk of having been exposed to the illness are asked to self-isolate.



Physical distancing

is a way that we can slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting close contact with others. Even though we're not sick, we should still keep about two meters (six feet), or the length of a queen-sized bed, from one another when we can, when outside our homes.



Physical Distancing NOW

AVOID

- Group gatherings
- Visits to bars/
restaurants
- Sleep overs
- Play dates
- Visiting the elderly
with children
- Crowded retail
stores
- Gyms
- Visitors to the
home
- Non essential
workers in the
home

USE CAUTION

- Visits to
supermarkets
- Visit to pharmacy
- Visit to GP
- Travelling
- Check on friends
and family safely
- Public transport

SAFE TO DO

- Go for a walk
- jogging
- Working in the
home
- DIY in and around
the home
- Reading
- Going for a drive
- Video calls
- Phone calls


Symptom-free doesn't mean infection-free

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS AND WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FEEL UNWELL?


 <p>Fever and tiredness Continuous cough Breathing difficulties</p> <p>If you have a new continuous cough or high temperature you should stay at home for 14 days</p>	 <p>Stay at least three steps away from other people in your home if possible</p>	 <p>Call 1-844-645-7811 or GP. Do NOT go to a GP, pharmacy or hospital.</p>	 <p>If your symptoms get worse or are no better after 14 days seek medical advice</p>
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Wash hands for about 20 seconds with soap and hot water or use a sanitiser gel




Use a tissue for coughs and sneezes




If you don't have a tissue use your sleeve



Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands



Avoid close contact with people who are unwell



Even if you have no symptoms, you should work at home where possible and avoid social venues

Provincial COVID-19 Response Strategies

The Province of BC has put in place a multi-level response structure, headed by the Premier and Health Minister. Below this are committees and coordination centres focused on providing information and coordinating the response for Public Health and health system operations, planning, logistics and finance.

1

Cabinet Sub-Committee

Chaired by **Premier John Horgan** and **Minister of Health Adrian Dix**.

2

Deputy Minister Committee

Chaired by the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Deputy Minister, Emergency Management BC

3

Communication and Information Centre to serve the general public.

4

Health Emergency Coordination Centre (HECC)

Incident Commander for the Ministry of Health coordination centre is **Peter Pokorny, Associated Deputy Minister**. The HECC includes the following streams of work:



Public Health Operations



Planning



Logistics



Finance



Health System Operations
(includes a Health Authority Chief Operating Officers group)

Northern Health

COVID-19 Response Strategies

All NH sites are involved in the ongoing planning and preparation for COVID-19. NH has an emergency operations centre (EOC) in place to oversee the response to COVID-19. It includes the following 11 task groups:

1 **Phase Scenario and Response**

2 **Acute Management & Ambulatory Care**
inventories of capacity, equipment, reducing non-urgent procedures, and services to increase capacity.

3 **Long-Term Care Response & Capacity**
capacity inventories, and protecting residents with visitor access restrictions, and screening.

4 **Population and Public Health**
ensuring provincial guidelines, policy and procedures for screening, testing, contact tracing and isolation are understood, communicated, and followed, as they evolve, working with industry work camps to ensure prevention and management of COVID-19 is understood.

5 **Staffing & Workplace Health & Safety**
reviewing essential service plans and staff deployment plans; ensuring staff have clear PPE use information, and access to psychological health and safety resources



Task groups continued

6

Logistics and Supply

tracking and managing supply use; strategies for mitigating supply shortages

7

Communications

working with Ministry of Health to develop and share clear and frequently-updated information to NH clinicians, front-line health care workers and staff, stakeholders and communities

8

Business Continuity

ensuring critical business areas such as staffing, payroll and information systems are not interrupted

9

Emergency Departments & Patient Transfer

ensuring EDs are prepared and patient transfer protocols are clear; scenario-based exercises

10

Primary and Community Care / Urgent & Primary Care Centres

establishing virtual options for screening, assessment and referral for testing

11

Infection Prevention & Control & Environmental Cleaning

in NH facilities

Northern Health

COVID-19 Response Strategies

The Province of BC has a 4-phased outbreak response. Here's how Northern Health has implemented it so far:



Phases 1 and 2: Complete

- Created acute care capacity and acute care utilization teams
- Established 1-800 line and virtual clinic
- Created more capacity in surgical, ambulatory care, medical imaging and lab
- Closed adult care centres and postponed respite care (care plans being updated)
- Shifted visitor policy
- Completed policy on working remotely
- Completed inventory of non-clinical staff who could be redeployed
- Reviewed pharmacy process, protocols, and business continuity
- Developed algorithms for emergency departments
- Established patient transport office 24/7, and associated protocols
- Updated protocols for kidney, cancer and cardiac care
- Developed protocols for contact tracing, case management, and self-monitoring
- Completed initial round of public materials and messaging, including daily staff digests, daily physician updates, weekly leadership memos, and weekly stakeholder updates
- Updated environmental cleaning
- Reassessed protocols for personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Held tabletop exercises for emergency department presentations and inpatient admissions
- Inventoried capacity for acute care and long-term care



Phases 3 and 4: Currently under way

- **Shifting to essential community services**
- **Creating public health response teams**
- **Reviewing ground transport**
- **Working with the Provincial Lab Agency to add testing lab equipment to the North**
- **Bolstering patient transport capacity**
- **Stabilizing supply chain for personal protective equipment (PPE)**
- **Modeling to inform ventilator distributions**
- **Forming local emergency operations committees**
- **Finalizing critical care plan for implementation – intubation, ventilation, negative pressure rooms, locations**
- **Creating inpatient areas to cohort those with respiratory symptoms**
- **Establishing separate emergency room triage areas for those with respiratory symptoms**
- **Establishing critical care clinical consultation and support team with clear process for accessing service**
- **Finalizing COVID-19 ethics framework and consultation service**

More information

If you have any questions or concerns, call the COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line for Northern BC residents at **1-844-645-7811**.

As well, the **BC COVID-19 Support app** is now available on the Apple App Store and Google Play (for Android). You can self-assess for COVID-19, and the app will also send you the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts.

Also, BC has a self-assessment website – bc.thrive.health – to help people decide

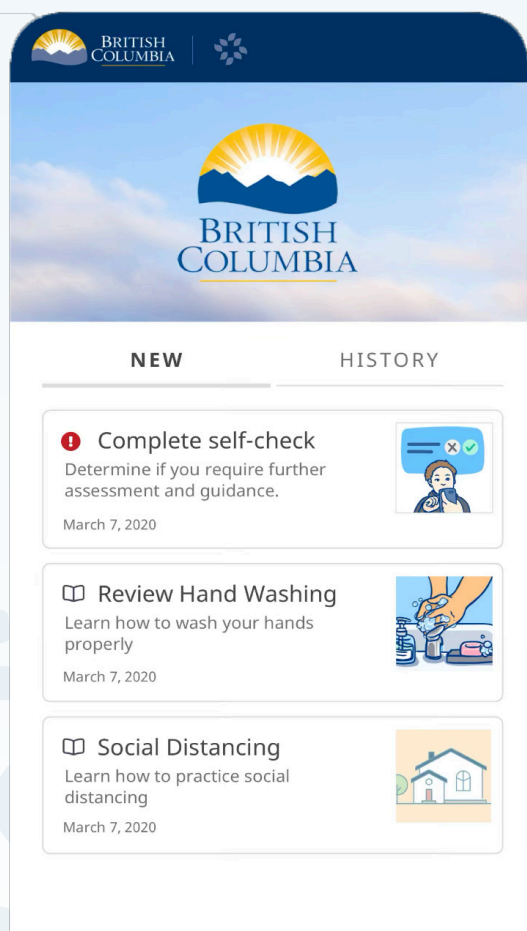
whether they need assessment or testing for COVID-19.

To order posters to put up in your community, visit the Northern Health website: www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/coronavirus-information-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-resources

A selection of posters can be found following this section.

Trusted websites:

- www.northernhealth.ca/health-topics/coronavirus-information-covid-19
- www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19
- www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions
- www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses
- www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse.html
- www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/translated-content





2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Do you have symptoms including: fever, sore throat, cough, sneezing, difficulty breathing?



Do you have shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest pain, feeling confused, having a hard time waking up? Please go to your health care facility.
THIS IS AN EMERGENCY



If you don't have severe symptoms, go home. **YOUR SYMPTOMS ARE NOT AN EMERGENCY.**
Call the NH COVID-19 Online & Information line at
1-844-645-7811

Remember to wash your hands and practice social distancing at all times.

Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: 1-844-645-7811
BC Govt. COVID-19 Helpline: 1-888-COVID19 or 1-888-268-4319

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS ABOUT COVID-19

As health authority employees, medical staff, and volunteers, your personal networks may be looking to you for information about COVID-19.

Here's what you can say:

Stay informed

Use trusted sources for up-to-date information, travel advisories and other updates:

- **BC Centre for Disease Control**
bccdc.ca
- **Northern Health**
northernhealth.ca
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
canada.ca/en/public-health
- **World Health Organization**
who.int

The Public Health Agency of Canada has created a toll-free phone number (1-833-784-4397) to answer questions from Canadians about novel coronavirus.

Practice good hygiene

"Wash your hands like you've been chopping jalapeños and you need to change your contacts."

- Dr. Bonnie Henry, BC's Provincial Health Officer



Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water



Use hand sanitizer after touching surfaces



Avoid touching your face



Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing



Avoid others who are unwell and stay home when you are sick

Know the signs and symptoms



Cough



Sneezing



Sore throat



Fever



Difficulty breathing

Follow the proper procedures

If you suspect you or someone in your close contacts has a COVID-19 infection, **CALL** ahead before seeking care

- Call your family physician and explain your concern. This ensures that the clinic is prepared to test you, if needed, and keeps the clinic's staff and other visitors safe.
- No family doctor? Call 8-1-1. Nurses at 8-1-1 can assess your risk and provide instructions.



Protect patient privacy

Our commitment to patient privacy and confidentiality is imperative.

Our public health response is most effective when people can trust that when they come forward and contact us for help, they will get the care they need to protect themselves and those around them.

We are committed to being as open as possible, while protecting patient privacy.

Hello! If you're self-isolating, I can help.

My name is:

I live locally at:

My phone number is:

If you're self-isolating due to COVID-19, I can help with:

☐

Picking up shopping

☐

Posting mail

☐

A friendly phone call

☐

Urgent Supplies

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2 meters distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on doorstep.

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My name is:

I live locally at:

My phone number is:

If you're self-isolating due to COVID-19, I can help with:

☐

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