



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

*The latest from Northern Health*

**Tuesday, August 19, 2020**

**Note:** Please share any information in this update as appropriate.

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## COVID-19

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### Provincial case counts and statements

**As of August 18, 2020**, there were **120** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Northern Health region. Twenty cases are considered active. As always, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested. Surveillance reports for COVID-19, which includes breakdown of cases by Health Service Delivery Area, are [posted every Thursday on the BCCDC website](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – August 18, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – August 13, 2020

### B.C.'s back to school plan

Students in B.C. will return to in-class learning September 2020. B.C.'s plan includes new health and safety measures, increased funding for protective equipment like masks and new learning groups to help keep everyone safe.

For more information, see the [B.C. government's back to school page](#).

## Visiting guidelines for long-term care

Long-Term Care and Assisted Living Facilities are currently advised to restrict visitors. Under these guidelines, residents will be able to visit with **one** family member or friend.

### Visitor protocols

- Visits must be booked in advance.
- Visits will take place in specific "visiting areas," which will be organized by each residence.
- Visits are not allowed if there is an active COVID-19 outbreak at the residence.
- Visits are not permitted if the visitor or resident are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Visitors will be screened for signs and symptoms of illness, including COVID-19, prior to every visit.
- All visitors are required to bring and wear a mask.
- Visitors must clean hands before and after visit.
- Visitors should cough or sneeze into their elbow and not touch their face.
- Visitors should maintain a distance of two arm lengths from others.

For more information, see the [BCCDC page on long-term care](#).

## COVID-19 Guide for communities

Northern Health's printable booklet [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#) contains all the information you need to help keep your community safe and well informed. The community guide is updated regularly online.

## Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- For **non-medical info**, call **1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319** 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 webpage](#).

## Overdose prevention and response

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### Drug checking can improve awareness and engagement

Drug checking is a provincially recognized overdose prevention service to support people who face the risk of overdose.

Drug checking involves inviting people to bring in substances that may be illegal to get information on what is in those substances; for example, to see if the substance contains fentanyl. Drug-checking services can be added to existing harm reduction services with minimal impact on staff time, capacity, or budget. Drug checking can be performed in a small amount of time by a variety of trained staff or peers.

Benefits of drug checking:

- Improves awareness of fentanyl exposure and its associated risks by enabling people to make informed decisions, take ownership over their drug use, and strategize around safety (e.g., reducing their dose or using with others).
- Creates new opportunities to engage with vulnerable and at-risk individuals who may not otherwise engage with health and social services.

For more information, or to set up a drug-checking site in your community, please contact [Nancy Dhaliwal](#), Regional Nursing Lead, Harm Reduction.

## Other organizational news

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### **NH Check In now live in Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Dawson Creek - give it a try!**

NH Check In helps NH provide better patient-centred services and support physical distancing during the pandemic. If you've used the similar Save My Spot service by LifeLabs, NH Check In will be familiar. Patients can safely wait in their cars, homes, or offices just before arriving for appointments, which should make waiting rooms less crowded.

NH Check In is now live for lab services in Prince Rupert, Terrace, and Dawson Creek. If you use lab services in either of these communities, [give NH Check In a try](#).

See full instructions on the [NH Check In page on northernhealth.ca](#) – it's easy to get set up on your phone, tablet, or computer!

For more information:

- [NH Check In page on northernhealth.ca](#)
- [NH Check In page on OurNH](#)