



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

Wednesday, November 18, 2020

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

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COVID-19

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of November 17, **539** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **64**
- New cases: **21**
- Currently in hospital: **11**
 - Currently admitted to HAU/ICU in hospital: **11**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **5**

As always, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

Surveillance reports, including a breakdown of cases by HSDA, are [posted each Friday by the BCCDC](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – November 17, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – November 13, 2020

Northern Health urges COVID-19 precautions as cases surge across the province

Northern Health is urging caution as we see COVID-19 activity surging across the province. NH is concerned with the upward trend and frequency of new cases and clusters in the region.

Recent orders in the Fraser Valley issued by Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry to address cases in the Lower Mainland are not currently directed at Northern Health; however, we need your support to avoid more stringent measures. We are encouraging against non-essential travel and are asking people to ensure they are following all of the current orders, guidance, and advice.

COVID-19 cases are not unexpected, but our behaviours can play a role in preventing transmission and spread by following these guidelines:

- Maintaining our social connections is important for our well-being. However, please keep your bubble small and limited to your household and a handful (up to six) close friends or family (your “safe six”).
- When planning your holiday gathering, please avoid travel and choose to celebrate with individuals in your bubble.
- Physical distancing measures are especially challenging for young people. It is important they also keep their bubble small and, as much as possible, limit their interactions to a close group of friends from within their school cohort.
- Essential workers, such as health-care workers and teachers, play a critical role in our communities and therefore it is imperative they also keep their bubble small.
- Remember: The provincial health officer’s orders to household gatherings applies province-wide. This means no more than six people from outside your household bubble should gather in your home.

If you are experiencing potential COVID-19 symptoms, we continue to ask that you self-isolate, and contact your primary care provider or the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line at 1-844-645-7811. Visit the BCCDC website for more info about COVID-19 and how to protect yourself, your family and your community.

The NH COVID-19 Online Clinic is expanding its services: Virtual Clinic soft-launched Monday, November 16 to a select group of communities

Northern Health is expanding its NH COVID-19 Online Clinic to provide virtual [primary and community care services](#). Patients will now be able to talk to a family doctor or nurse practitioner by phone or through a video call.

The clinic soft launched on Monday, November 16 to a select group of communities, with a focus on providing primary care services to patients in the most rural and remote communities. Over the coming weeks, services will be provided throughout the North.

Phone: 1-844-645-7811

Hours: 10 am to 10 pm, 7 days a week, including holidays

The Virtual Clinic is an expansion of the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic. The COVID-19 Online Clinic is now the Northern Health Virtual Clinic, and the phone number remains the same.

The clinic will continue to provide screening, assessment, and coordination of testing for COVID-19.

As we work to train and hire permanent staff for the clinic, wait times for services may vary. Please be patient with us as we work to implement these new services.

In the coming weeks, more information on the Virtual Clinic will be shared on Northern Health social media channels and on <https://www.northernhealth.ca/services/digital-health/virtual-clinic>.

New Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest - Issue 11: New masking guidelines, Christmas and holiday plans, and more

The long-term care task group is producing updates twice a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[This issue](#) of the update provides information about new masking guidelines, Christmas and holiday plans, outbreak guidelines in long-term care homes, and the fall flu campaign.

New BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections available: See the current provincial trends

[New modelling and projection figures](#) are available from the BCCDC. These figures represent the latest epidemiological numbers and data trends and were used in the [November 12 COVID-19 joint statement](#).

This update includes information on:

- Epidemiology (how and where the virus has affected people in BC)
- COVID-19 testing and cases among school-aged children
- Health human resources
- Lab services capacity
- Hospital capacity
- Surgical renewal commitment
- Influenza vaccine updates

[All BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections](#) are available on both the [BCCDC website](#) and on the [modelling and projections page](#) of the NH physician website.

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#)
- [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

What you can do in your community to support those at risk of an overdose during COVID-19

Winter conditions have arrived leading to increased vulnerability for people without a warm place to stay. This results in more small groups congregating for warmth, and an increased risk of people using substances alone due to cold weather and COVID-19 isolation restrictions.

Drug Toxicity Alerts:

The current Provincial [Overdose Alert](#) continues. Please be aware that the current drug supply is extremely toxic. Recent reports includes contamination of both opioids as well as stimulants. It is important to be aware that all drugs may be contaminated and that more than usual naloxone may be needed to reverse an overdose. Distributing more than usual amounts of naloxone, and bulk requests are supported by NH.

What you can do:

It is important to ensure that necessary healthcare and harm reduction services targeting vulnerable populations are open within communities. Many overdose prevention sites continue to provide drug-checking services.

- Consider distributing more than usual amounts of naloxone
- Support requests for bulk amounts of naloxone
- Provide outreach services offering phone screening and supply distribution to clients to minimize contact and promote physical distancing