



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

*The latest from Northern Health*

February 9, 2022

## Sections

[COVID-19](#)

[Overdose prevention and response](#)

[Organizational news](#)

## COVID-19

---

### COVID-19 testing and self-isolation

As COVID-19 activity increases across BC, guidance for [when to get a COVID-19 test](#) has been updated.

A COVID-19 test is not recommended if:

- You have no symptoms, even if you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive
- You are fully vaccinated (two doses), experiencing mild symptoms and can manage your illness at home. Self-isolate for five days. Notify your close contacts so they can self-monitor for symptoms

A COVID-19 test is recommended if:

- You have symptoms, and:
  - You are at higher risk of severe illness
  - You identify with a high-risk setting - such as health care workers, first responders, residents of congregate settings, or live in a remote or rural community

For more information, including how to get a test, and information about rapid test use, please see the [Northern Health Stories site](#).

### Access/assessment for the rapid tests is only available through the following options:

- A requisition sent from a primary care provider

- Calling the NH Virtual Clinic at 1-844-645-7811
- Completion of the NH COVID-19 Test Booking

**Note:** Patients with mild symptoms will be asked to stay home and self-isolate, and will not be provided with a rapid test based on their symptoms and risk factors.

Patients who require testing (dependant on symptoms and risk factors) will be referred to a test site for a PCR test or to pick up a take-home rapid test. Most tests will be PCR. A friend, family member, etc. may pick up the take-home rapid test on the patient's behalf. Availability of rapid tests may be limited at times, depending on supply.

### **Get your booster (if eligible):**

Boosters are the health care system's best defense against COVID-19 because the vaccine becomes less effective over time. The booster returns, and even improves, vaccine effectiveness from shortly after when you received Dose 2. Boosters help protect our seniors, who are most likely to experience severe illness and hospitalization as a result of COVID-19 infection. **If or when you are eligible (6 months after Dose 2), please [book your booster immediately](#).** For more information on Omicron and the importance of getting your booster dose, check out "[Omicron Wave COVID-19](#)", a presentation by Medical Health Officer Dr. Corneil.

### **COVID-19 treatments in BC**

Northern Health has established a process for access to anti-viral COVID-19 treatments for high-risk groups. Therapeutic treatments for COVID-19 have been approved for use outside hospitals. These treatments do not stop you from getting COVID-19. They are used to prevent severe illness in people who are at higher risk from COVID-19. To be effective, they must be taken within five to seven days of developing symptoms. If you have received a notice that you are clinically extremely vulnerable for COVID-19, and you receive a positive COVID-19 test result, please contact your primary care provider for more information.

Visit the [Government of BC](#) and [British Columbia Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\)](#) websites for more information about COVID-19 treatments.

### **Proof of vaccination**

By order of the Provincial Health Officer, proof of full vaccination is required to access some events, services and businesses in BC. This requirement has been extended until June 30, 2022.

Proof of vaccination requirements apply to all people born in 2010 or earlier (12+) and covers access to many events and places, such as concerts, restaurants, swimming pools, indoor tickets sporting events, and others. Detailed information can be found on the [Province of BC website](#).

### **Youth aged 12 to 18**

Youth aged 12 to 18 can carry their own BC Vaccine Card, or have a trusted adult carry it for them. Youth are not required to show valid government photo ID.

- 12 year olds only need to show proof of 1 dose of vaccine
- 13 to 18 year olds need to show proof of 2 doses of vaccine

### **Children aged 5 to 11**

Children aged 5 to 11 are not required to show proof of vaccination.

### **COVID-19 vaccine**

Please visit the [BCCDC COVID-19 vaccine website](#) for information about: vaccine doses (first, second, third, booster, and pediatric), vaccine registration and eligibility, vaccines and children, getting a vaccine, vaccine safety, vaccine considerations (including pregnancy), proof of vaccination, and more.

**Please note** that vaccination doses may be by appointment only, not walk-ins. Please see the [Northern Health COVID-19 immunization clinic page](#) for more information for your community.

### **Update on vaccination requirement for health professionals**

In follow-up to the notice given to health professionals in October 2021, the provincial health officer is finalizing, in consultation with all health professional colleges, an order that requires all regulated health professionals to be vaccinated by March 24, 2022, to work in their occupation in British Columbia.

Under the order, regulated health professionals who are vaccinated with one dose before March 24, 2022, may continue to work as long as they receive a second dose 28-35 days after their first dose.

To read more about this order, including the health care professionals now included, please see [the Government of BC website](#).

### **Northern BC community immunization coverage**

Immunization coverage for every community in Northern Health is available for you on the [Northern BC community immunization coverage update \(PDF\)](#). This link includes both first- and second-dose counts and percentages per community. It's updated every week.

### **Community Toolkit**

To empower local partners to share helpful information, we have created a [COVID-19 Community Toolkit](#) - a digital resource for community partners, which includes vaccine clinic information (including [clinic schedules](#)), a community guide, trusted information and links, and more!

### **BC vaccination coverage rates and COVID-19 activity**

#### **BCCDC COVID-19 dashboard**

Visit the BCCDC [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) for information by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

## COVID-19 Numbers

As of February 8, **26, 329** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **1,105**
- New cases: **192**
- Currently in hospital: **39**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **15**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **288**

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.

As well, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [BC COVID-19 pandemic update](#) – February 8, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 3, 2022

## Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Northern Health online booking form - COVID-19 test](#)
- [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 Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- 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

---

### FNHA Community Situation Report: Toxic Drug Poisoning Events and Deaths

Each month, the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) reports on the number of toxic drug poisoning events and deaths that have taken place in First Nations populations in BC. In the [Toxic Drug Poisoning Events and Deaths and FNHA's Response](#) report, FNHA details the period January 1, 2020 to October 31, 2021 and summarizes the actions that the it is taking in response to the toxic drug emergency.

Important statistics:

- October 2021

- 311 paramedic-attended drug poisoning events reported among First Nations people. This shows:
  - A 6.1% increase from November 2021
  - A 3% increase from October 2020
- First Nations people represented 19.4% of toxic drug poisoning events
- Women represented 38.1% of all First Nations toxic drug poisoning events
- Women represented 22.6% of all toxic drug poisoning events among all BC residents
- [Between](#) the declaration of the Overdose Emergency in 2016 [to](#) October 2021, 1,129 First Nations lives have been lost due to toxic drug poisoning.

During the Overdose Emergency, FNHA has been involved with: First Nations Treatment and Healing Centres, Intensive Case Management (ICM) Teams, Indigenous land-based healing services, “Not Just Naloxone” training, the development of a network of peer coordinators, hiring of harm reduction educators, dispensing opioid agonist therapy (OAT), and distributing naloxone.

### **More than 2,200 British Columbians lost to illicit drugs in 2021**

The toxic illicit drug supply claimed the lives of at least 2,224 British Columbians in 2021, according to preliminary data released by the BC Coroners Service.

The last two months of 2021 saw the largest number of suspected illicit drug deaths ever recorded in the province, with 210 deaths in November and an additional 215 in December. The 2,224 total number of deaths is 26% more than the 1,767 illicit drug-related deaths investigated by the BC Coroners Service in 2020, and equates to an average of 6.1 lives lost every day.

To continue reading and for more information, please see [the article on the BC Public Safety and Solicitor General webpage](#).

## **Organizational news**

---

### **Up to \$50,000 for your project: Apply to the Rural, Remote, and Indigenous Grants program by February 17!**

Are you looking to address food security or food sovereignty in your community?

Northern Health, in collaboration with the [First Nations Healthy Authority](#), is pleased to announce the new [Rural, Remote, and Indigenous Food Action Grant](#) to support projects addressing food security and food sovereignty in Northern BC.

For more information about food security, food sovereignty, and grant opportunities, please see [the whole article on the Northern Health Stories site](#).