



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

March 2, 2022

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COVID-19 Restriction updates

COVID-19 Restrictions that have changed

As of February 17, many restrictions have eased and, with proof of vaccination and masks, several activities have returned to normal.

Masks continue to be required in all public indoor settings for all people born in 2017 or earlier (5+). Proof of full vaccination also continues to be required to access some events, services, and businesses in BC.

For more information about all orders, and mask and proof of vaccination, please see the [Government of BC website](#).

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 ticketed 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 Information and updates

Novavax/Nuvaxovid COVID-19 vaccine

Health Canada has recently approved the protein-based [Novavax/Nuvaxovid](#) COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is approved for people who are 18 years of age and older. Its safety and effectiveness in people younger than 18 years of age have not yet been established.

It is not yet available for use, but people interested in this vaccine can call [1-833-838-2323](tel:1-833-838-2323) for more information and to request this vaccine.

Online screening tool for COVID-19 treatments available now

An online screening tool and virtual assessment service is available for people with a positive COVID-19 test to see if they are eligible for COVID-19 antiviral treatments and to go on to receive treatment.

British Columbians can now find out if these treatments are right for them through this new virtual service by following the four-step process available online (www.gov.bc.ca/covidtreatments), starting with a self-assessment. A physician and pharmacist team will decide if treatment is safe and appropriate as part of this process.

Paxlovid and Sotrovimab treatments are not suitable for everyone and must be prescribed by a health care provider who can assess interactions with other conditions or medications. Some patients may not be able to receive treatment if they are already taking some other medications.

To access this tool, and for more information, please visit the [BC Government COVID-19 treatments page](#).

Treatment for eligible individuals who test positive for COVID-19

If you test positive for COVID-19, you may be eligible for specific anti-viral treatments if you:

- Received a clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) letter
- Are being actively treated for cancer
- Have received an organ transplant
- Have cystic fibrosis or severe renal disease
- Are moderately or severely immunocompromised

- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated people who have certain chronic health conditions or identify as Indigenous

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.

To access these treatments:

Contact your health care provider, doctor or specialist as soon as you know you are positive for COVID-19 and ask if you are eligible for specific treatments.

To learn more about COVID-19 treatments, visit the [BCCDC COVID-19 treatments page](#).

COVID-19 testing and self-isolation

Wondering [when to get a COVID-19 test](#)?

For most people:

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

Publicly funded [rapid antigen testing kits](#) are available for residents of BC 70 years and older who have a Personal Health Number (PHN). A test should only be used by people who develop symptoms of COVID-19 and want to confirm a positive or negative result. The tests are not suitable for international travel requirements.

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 form](#)

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. **Do not go to the emergency room for a COVID-19 test.**

COVID-19 vaccine and booster

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.

COVID-19 booster

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. **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.

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 March 2, **25, 514** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- New cases: **45**
- Currently in hospital: **43**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **11**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **313**

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](#) – March 1, 2022
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – February 24, 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

First Nations Health Authority Bad Dope Alert Issued for Fort St. James, Binche, Tl'az'ten, and Nak'azdli

The First Nations Health Authority has issued a bad dope alert for the communities of Fort St. James, Binche, Tl'az'ten, and Nak'azdli.

The toxic drug circulating is sold as down or heroin. It may be different colours, causes heavy and prolonged sedation, and may require more naloxone to reverse. This information is supported by what peers are seeing in community. The drugs have not been tested at this time.

Safer Drug Use Tips:

- [Safer drug use tips \(Toward the Heart\)](#)
- [Learn to recognize and respond to different kinds of overdoses \(Toward the Heart\)](#)
- Use local overdose prevention sites (OPS) where available
- Use with someone and stagger use so someone can respond to an overdose
- Use [Be Safe](#) or [Lifeguard](#) apps if you are using alone
- Start low and go slow
- Mixing substances increases risk
- Carry and be trained on using naloxone: [Training \(Toward the Heart\)](#)

This alert expires March 11, 2022.

Organizational news

Recall – Powdered infant formula products

Certain powdered infant formula products under the Abbott brand have been recalled due to possible *Cronobacter sakazakii* and *Salmonella* contamination. These include a variety of powdered Similac products.

There have been reported illnesses in the United States associated with the consumption of these products. However, there have been no reported illnesses in Canada associated with the consumption of these products.

Affected products should not be used, consumed, served, distributed, or sold.

For a list of affected products, their codes, images of the products, and expiration dates, see the [Government of Canada website page for this recall](#).

New animated video on compassion-informed care helps promote respect, resilience, and trust

Indigenous Health, Northern Health and the National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH) present a new short animated video for health care professionals on compassion-informed care. The video is intended to support health care professionals in their ongoing journeys to create respectful relationships with the people they serve – particularly Indigenous peoples and Indigenous communities.

To continue reading about this video, and to watch it, visit the [Northern Health Stories site](#).