

COVID-19 UPDATE – April 10th, 2020

In an effort to keep our community partners connected, we are providing you with regular COVID-19 updates.

Key Updates for April 10th, 2020

- For a full list of updates from VCH visit vch.ca
- Set-up of Vancouver Convention Health Centre complete
- Emergency departments prepared to safely care for patients

Set-up of Vancouver Convention Health Centre complete

As part of Vancouver Coastal Health's (VCH) ongoing planning and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the alternate care site located at the Vancouver Convention Centre has been set-up and can be operationalized as needed. The 271-bed site, known as the Vancouver Convention Health Centre, increases provincial hospital bed capacity for lower acuity, non-COVID-19 patients, in the event of a surge in COVID-19 cases. The site will only be used if necessary.

"I want to thank all the people who worked so hard to make this a reality," said Health Minister Adrian Dix. "This is a critical step to ensure that B.C. is prepared for the worst as we work for the best outcome."

The site has four nursing stations, patient and staff showers and washrooms, oxygen and medical supplies. Bed spaces have been set-up in a pod format with approximately 25 patients to a dedicated health care team. A VCH medical director and operations lead would be at the site to oversee transfers, provide medical oversight and support an interdisciplinary team of health care providers including, doctors, nurses, care aides and other clinical and non-clinical care providers.

The site also houses B.C.'s Mobile Medical Unit for patients who might have a higher care need on-site prior to being transferred to a regional hospital. The site is not intended for walk-ins as patients will be transferred directly from a referring hospital if it is needed. While VCH continues to be cautiously optimistic that the COVID-19 curve can be flattened, precautionary steps continue to be taken.

Emergency departments prepared to safely care for patients

During the COVID-19 pandemic, emergency departments across VCH are prepared to safely receive and care for all individuals who experience health conditions that require urgent and emergency care. The public is advised to seek urgent and emergent care without delay, to prevent the exacerbation of medical conditions.

Some health conditions that may require emergency care include:

- Trouble breathing or catching your breath
- Severe abdominal or chest pain/pressure
- Weakness or tingling on one side of your body
- Loss of consciousness
- Heavy bleeding

For non-life-threatening urgent care such as sprains, strains, fevers, minor burns and infections or when you are unable to see your family doctor or care provider visit an [Urgent Primary Care Centre](#). These centres are open extended hours, every day, and staffed with emergency-trained health professionals to handle urgent and primary care. If you're not sure if it's an emergency, you can call 811 to access [HealthLink BC](#) services for trusted health advice. This free, 24-hour non-emergency multi-lingual phone service is staffed by trained registered nurses, pharmacists and dietitians who can help answer your health-related questions.

At this time, patients who require a refill of their regular medications do not need to visit a doctor or nurse practitioner for an updated prescription. Instead, a pharmacist can provide patients with a refill or emergency supply of their medications. This is to avoid non-essential visits to a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Hospitals continue to be safe places for patients. Staff are prepared and have protocols in place to ensure any patient that comes to the hospital with COVID-19 symptoms does not pose a risk to others. These guidelines are in place as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of patients, staff and physicians.

Key Messages to Share

- Practice [physical distancing](#) if you have to go out
- If you think you have COVID-19 take the self-assessment here: covid19.thrive.health
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms