

COVID-19 UPDATE – July 17th, 2020

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

Key Updates for July 17th, 2020

For a full list of updates from VCH visit vch.ca/COVID19

- Update on COVID-19 Cases
- Public Health Agency of Canada COVID-19 Update
- Record high illicit drug deaths in June

Update on COVID-19 Cases

Yesterday, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, announced 21 new cases of COVID-19 in the province for a total of 3,170 cases in British Columbia. Of the total COVID-19 cases, 15 individuals are hospitalized, three of whom are in intensive care. The remaining people with COVID-19 are recovering at home in self-isolation. Since the start of the pandemic, there have been 1,028 cases of COVID-19 in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. Dr. Henry discussed a new serology report which shows approximately 16,000 to 17,000 British Columbians may have been infected with the virus, which is eight times more than tested.

Public Health Agency of Canada COVID-19 Update

As of July 15, there were 108,486 cases of COVID-19 in Canada, including 8,798 deaths. 67% of people have now recovered. Labs across Canada have tested over 3,302,000 people for COVID-19 to date. Over the past week, an average of 40,000 people were tested daily, with 1% testing positive. COVID-19 spreads quickly in crowded places and closed spaces where there is close-contact between people. Infected individuals can transmit the virus to others, even when they look and feel well. Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, says this is why it is so important to change the way people gather this summer. "We are concerned about the increasing number of reports of individuals contracting COVID-19 at parties, nightclubs and bars, as well as increasing rates of transmission among young Canadians in some jurisdictions across the country. Although severe illness due to COVID-19 is not common among younger age groups, there have been several reports of severe illness among even young and active adults. We are all in this together and have a shared responsibility to help keep COVID-19 transmission low," says Dr. Tam.

Record high illicit drug deaths in June

B.C. recorded a record-high number of overdose deaths in June. 175 people died as a result of illicit drug toxicity, surpassing the previous high of 171, reported in May 2020, and 161 reported in December 2016. B.C. has recorded four consecutive months with over 100 illicit drug toxicity deaths. There have been 728 illicit drug deaths to date in 2020 in B.C., and the number of deaths in each health authority is at or near the highest monthly totals ever recorded. Fentanyl remains the most significant driver in the number of deaths our communities are experiencing. Lisa Lapointe, Chief Coroner, BC Coroner's Service says the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting people who use drugs, as social networks are smaller and access to key harm reduction services is challenging.

For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>.

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
- Anyone in the VCH region with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, however mild, can now be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing>
- Self-isolate at home for 10 days if you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Find helpful posters, handouts and other resources about COVID-19 [here](#).