

COVID-19 UPDATE – August 17th, 2020

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

Key Updates for August 17th, 2020

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

- Update on COVID-19 Cases
- Stay home if you're sick
- Updated guidelines for masks in schools
- Guides for a COVID-safe summer

Update on COVID-19 Cases

In today's Ministry of Health briefing, Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, and Dr. Réka Gustafson, B.C.'s deputy provincial health officer, reported 236 new cases in B.C. since last Friday. Those include:

- 100 new cases from Aug. 14 to 15
- 88 new cases from Aug. 15 to 16
- 48 new cases in the last 24 hours

There have been a total of 4,594 cases in British Columbia since the pandemic began. Of those, 1,419 cases have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. Currently, four people are hospitalized in B.C. with COVID-19, three of whom are in intensive care, and 3,653 people have fully recovered. There have been two new health-care facility outbreaks, including one at the Arbutus Care Centre in the VCH region. The outbreak at the Joseph and Rosalie Segal Family Health Centre has been declared over. In total, nine long-term care or assisted-living facilities and one acute-care facility have active outbreaks. There are no new community outbreaks, however there continue to be community exposure events, including in Vancouver Coastal Health, and on flights into and out of British Columbia. Check the Vancouver Coastal Health [Public Exposures](#) page for the locations and times of known possible exposures to COVID-19 to the public in our region.

Stay home if you're sick

Dr. Gustafson spoke about the ability of the virus to spread with very mild symptoms, especially for young adults. Many people may not even realize they have COVID-19 and inadvertently spread it to others; to friends, colleagues, family members or vulnerable people in the community. She issued a reminder: if you are informed by public health teams that you are a close contact, it is essential you stay home for the full 14-day self-isolation period. With the number of people in B.C. with COVID-19 today, we are at a time that we all need to be particularly alert to how we are feeling. You may feel well enough to see friends or go into work. However, if you are feeling ever so slightly unwell, stay home from work and gatherings. Our COVID-19 champions are the people who choose to stay home and stay away from others when feeling even the slightest bit sick. Making the choice to stay home is choosing to keep yourself and those around you safe.

Updated guidelines for masks in schools

Earlier today, the Ministry of Education announced updated health and safety guidelines to help ensure a consistent province-wide approach to keep schools safe for all students, teachers and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the guidelines, masks will be required for staff, middle and secondary students in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made for students who cannot wear masks for medical reasons. The guidelines also cover the key components of delivering K-12 education during the pandemic, including curriculum, report cards, supports for students with disabilities/diverse abilities, and finance and operations. In order to support staff and students to meet this expectation, the ministry is providing additional funding to school districts that will support the purchase of up to 1.5 million masks, enough for every public-school staff member and student to have at least two masks.

Guides for a COVID-safe summer

Wondering how you can see friends safely or work out in a fitness centre? Eat in a restaurant? Spend a day at the beach? Vancouver Coastal Health is publishing a series of Safe summer guides, where you can find tips on how to enjoy your summer safely. Whether it's stocking up on supplies before leaving for a road trip, wiping down fitness equipment, paying by tap, or collecting contact info at a rec sports game, we have all the information you need to stay safe while having fun. Find them on our VCH social channels ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)) or on VCH.ca [here](#).

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](#).