

LATEST UPDATE – September 24th, 2020

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

Ministry of Health update

In today's Ministry of Health briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, reported 148 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 8,543 cases in B.C. since the pandemic began. Of those, 3,094 are in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. Currently, 61 individuals are hospitalized with COVID-19, 20 of whom are in intensive care. The remaining people are recovering at home in self-isolation. VCH Assisted living, long-term care homes and seniors' rental buildings with ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks are

- Point Grey Private Hospital long-term care facility
- Yaletown House long-term care facility
- Banfield Pavilion (fourth floor west), long-term care facility.

School

Today Dr. Bonnie Henry and VCH Chief Medical Health Officer Dr. Patty Daly released a joint media statement on schools:

Being a parent in a pandemic comes with a lot of challenges and public health officials are here to help.

Public health has a long history of working collaboratively to promote and protect the health of our school communities. Like every year, we will support our teachers and education staff to make this return to school successful.

The robust school safety plans currently in place across the province are designed to minimize the transmission of COVID-19 in school settings.

VCH Public Health teams actively monitor and trace cases of COVID-19 in schools on a 24/7 basis. Our immediate priority for every known case is to identify people who have been their close contacts during the infectious period, to notify these contacts and then to ensure that all contacts are following the appropriate public health directions for self-isolation.

Whether in schools or in other settings, VCH Public Health notifies all contacts of cases exposed to COVID-19 in the most direct manner possible. This is the most effective contact tracing practice – it allows Public Health to provide clear direction to those contacts while respecting patient confidentiality which is important for the effective management of the pandemic.

When there has been exposure of classrooms or cohorts of students and staff in a school setting, we work with the school administrator to quickly send an email and letter to notify the staff and students (or their parents) identified as contacts. VCH Public Health will follow-up directly with all contacts who receive a notification in order to provide further public health advice. All notifications to school administrators – including school exposure and outbreaks – are posted to the VCH school exposure webpage at <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19/school-exposures>.

Schools are part of our communities – and a safe community means a safe school. That is why we in public health will continue to promptly and appropriately respond to cases, clusters and outbreaks of COVID-19 to ensure our communities, and the schools in them, remain at low risk for COVID-19 transmission.

COVID-19 will be around for months to come – and public health officials will be here with us through it all.

Testing

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. Contact your physician or nurse practitioner's office, or a local community collection centre to arrange for a test. Phone numbers and locations of collection centre can be found by visiting: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing> or by calling 8-1-1. 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/>.