

## LATEST UPDATE – October 20th, 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 167 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 11,854 cases in B.C. since the pandemic began. Of those, 4,175 are in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. Currently, 69 individuals are hospitalized with COVID-19, 18 of whom are in intensive care. The remaining people are recovering at home in self-isolation. There was one new death today, bringing the provincial total at 254. VCH Assisted living, long-term care homes and seniors' rental buildings with ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks are:

- Point Grey Private Hospital
- Royal Arch Masonic Home
- Haro Park Centre (entire facility)
- Three Links Care Centre
- Weinberg Residence Multi-Level Care.

### Get your flu shot: The reasons are all around you

If there was ever a time to get a flu shot, this is the year. In advance of flu clinics opening later this month, VCH is encouraging local residents to book ahead and schedule a time to get their flu vaccination. This year, VCH has increased the number of flu clinics being offered in local community centres and other community spaces to meet expected demand.

This year is unique because we are also trying to contain and prevent the spread of not only COVID-19, but other severe respiratory diseases like the flu. Getting vaccinated can reduce your chance of developing symptoms that resemble COVID-19, which would require you to get tested and self-isolate. Getting a flu shot can also protect your loved ones and reduce the impact on the healthcare system.

Making an appointment is strongly encouraged this year to help reduce line-ups and maintain safe physical distancing. Contact your doctor, pharmacist or go to [vch.ca/flu](http://vch.ca/flu) to book an appointment. You can also phone to book an appointment at a local public health clinic in Vancouver, Richmond, North Shore, Sea-to-Sky, Powell River, Sunshine Coast, Bella Coola and Bella Bella. To book and find the closest location go to [vch.ca/flu](http://vch.ca/flu), use [ImmunizeBC's Flu Locator](#) or call 8-1-1 if you don't have access to the Internet.

Read the full media release here: <http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/news-releases/get-your-flu-shot-the-reasons-are-all-around-you>

### Updated illicit drug death reports released by BC Coroners Service

The BC Coroners Service has published updated reports on illicit drug toxicity deaths to the end of September 2020. The following are the key preliminary findings of these reports (data is subject to change):

- In September 2020, there were 127 suspected illicit drug toxicity deaths. This represents a 112% increase over the number of deaths in September 2019 (60) and a 15% decrease from the number of deaths in August 2020 (150).
- There were about 4.2 illicit drug toxicity deaths per day in September.
- In 2020, 70% of those dying were aged 30 to 59. Males accounted for 80% of deaths.
- Vancouver, Surrey and Victoria have experienced the highest number of illicit drug toxicity deaths this year.
- Both male and female illicit drug toxicity death rates have decreased in recent months from highs in May, June and July.
- Illicit drug toxicity death rates among all age groups have declined from highs in May, June and July. However, rates among people aged 40 to 59 remain at high levels.
- No deaths have been reported at supervised consumption or drug overdose prevention sites.

More information can be found here: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020PSSG0059-001880>

### Reminder: Guidance on Halloween

Celebrate less socially and trick-or-treat locally this Halloween!

- Skip Halloween parties this year
- Trick or treating in small groups can be a safe and a fun activity
- Get creative in making space when handing out treats.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/social-interactions/halloween>

### 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 centres 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/>.

### Other resources

To find the Provincial Health Officer's orders, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

To see a map of COVID-19 cases by local health area, visit:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data>

For a listing of the community exposure events, go to: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/public-exposures>

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For community engagement opportunities at VCH, see: <http://cean.vch.ca/members/current-opportunities/>