

LATEST UPDATE – October 2nd, 2020

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

Ministry of Health update

In yesterday's Ministry of Health briefing, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, reported 82 new cases of COVID-19, for a total of 9,220 cases in B.C. since the pandemic began. Of those, 3,360 are in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. Currently, 69 individuals are hospitalized with COVID-19, 19 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
- Banfield Pavilion (fourth floor west) long-term care facility
- Haro Park Centre (Special Care Unit) long-term care facility
- Holy Family Hospital (Neighbourhoods 1 and 2) long-term care facility.

Statement from Dr. Henry

"As our understanding of COVID-19 has grown, so has our understanding of what safe activities we are all able to do. Our daily lives may be quite different, but by so many people in B.C. doing their part keeping our groups small, staying apart and staying safe – we have been able to expand those activities. The result is that today many businesses are fully operating, students are in school and we are able to see a small number of family and friends. The wall that protects these activities is made up of our layers of protection and safety basics – washing our hands, maintaining a safe physical distance from others, using a mask when that is difficult and always staying home when ill. We are on the right track and we want to keep that wall strong. To do that, it is important that we continue to keep our groups small, stick with our 'safe six,' minimize our travel and keep our safety basics top of mind. By supporting each other to do the right thing, by offering kindness and care to our friends and neighbours, we can protect our communities. Let's keep going."

Update on COVID-19 testing in schools

Public health has a long history of working collaboratively to promote and protect the health of our school communities. The robust school safety plans currently in place across the province are designed to minimize the transmission of COVID-19 in school settings. We have confidence in these school safety plans.

In a school setting, Public Health defines an exposure as a single person with lab-confirmed COVID-19 infection who attended school and exposed others during their infectious period. An outbreak is declared at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer when exceptional measures are needed to control transmission. We have seen likely transmission in some school settings. This is expected and our normal public health measures have been effective in preventing further exposures. To date, Vancouver Coastal Health has not declared any outbreaks in schools.

In all of these cases, Public Health will investigate, interview the case and conduct contact tracing. Should a student or staff test positive for COVID-19, our immediate priority is to notify individuals who may be exposed in the most direct manner. If people have not been contacted by Public Health, it is safe for them to remain in school.

Vancouver Coastal Health cannot comment on specific cases in schools or on specific cases in the community. We respect patient confidentiality at all times and rely on it for our public health response, so people feel safe co-operating with our teams and don't face stigma from the public or school community. During the pandemic, some people have refused testing or were hesitant to co-operate with Public Health for fear of being outed. Some community members have also experienced discrimination due to their diagnosis. Protecting a patient's confidentiality is critical and enables us to track and limit the spread of COVID-19.

VCH is committed to posting school exposures and outbreaks on our website. We want to reassure parents, students and staff that even in situations where we post an exposure, all close contacts would have received direct notification by phone or letter.

For more information, please refer to our joint statement with Dr. Patricia Daly and Dr. Bonnie Henry:
<http://www.vch.ca/about-us/news/news-releases/joint-statement-from-dr-patricia-daly-vch-chief-medical-health-officer-and-dr-bonnie-henry-provincial-health-officer>

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 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/>.

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:

BCCDC (flights, work sites, etc.): <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/>