

## LATEST UPDATE – Mar. 5, 2021

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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 joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported 564 new cases.

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 82,473 since the start of the pandemic. Of the new cases, 168 people were in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region.

Across the province, there were four new COVID-19 related deaths, while 248 people are currently hospitalized, with 64 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. The total number of individuals who have passed away due to COVID-19 is 1,376. There are now 4,743 active cases of COVID-19 across B.C. currently.

There have been 46 new confirmed COVID-19 cases that are variants of concern in our province, for a total of 246 cases. Of the total cases, 16 cases are active and the remaining people have recovered. This includes 218 cases of the B.1.1.7 (UK) variant and 28 cases of the B.1.351 (South Africa) variant. Dr. Henry said we are most concerned about transmissibility and where people are becoming infected with variants of concern. Right now we continue to have challenges in identifying the transmission chains for about 25% of our cases.

Dr. Henry said we are in a new place in the COVID-19 pandemic. We are now getting a regular supply of COVID-19 vaccines that is increasing our protection, but we are also still seeing an uptick in new cases. The successes of the vaccines can be diminished with a surge in new cases in those who will be immunized in the months ahead. This is why our layers of protection need to continue to be top of mind for all of us.

### Vaccination update

Since the start of immunizations, 298,851 vaccinations have been delivered in B.C. (not including yesterday), with 86,746 of those being a second dose.

The first deliveries of the AstraZeneca-Serum Institute of India COVID-19 vaccines will arrive in our province in the coming days. The vaccine will initially be used to address ongoing clusters and outbreaks in some communities. The vaccine will be made available to first responders and essential workers. The delivery will run parallel with our age-based, community-wide immunization program.

A detailed plan will be developed for the AstraZeneca-Serum Institute of India vaccines, which will be shared later in the month.

More information and immunization data is available through this page: [BCCDC](#).

### Point-of-care rapid testing

Dr. Henry said as part of the ongoing COVID-19 response, the Province is using point-of-care rapid testing as another tool to support our public health contact tracing and outbreak response efforts.

While less reliable than the highly-effective PCR tests used in our labs, point-of-care tests will continue to be used as part of public health outbreak response in rural and remote communities and at some worksites and community living locations.

Private worksites may choose to adopt point-of-care testing. These locations must be accredited and meet all quality assurance requirements, and must immediately report all positive test results to public health and regional health authorities for follow-up. For any workplace considering using these tests, it is important to remember these tests do not replace any of the public health orders, protective measures or COVID-19 safety plans required for all B.C. workplaces.

### COVID-19 in Whistler

Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) continues to record a further decline in COVID-19 transmission in Whistler compared to previous reporting periods.

- From Feb. 22 to Feb. 28, VCH identified 18 new cases of COVID-19 in Whistler. This accounts for eight fewer new cases recorded since the last reporting period (Feb. 16 – Feb. 21).
- There have been a total of 720 cases in Whistler since Jan. 1, 2021.
- Since Jan. 1, a total of 699 individuals have recovered from COVID-19 in Whistler.

The reported cases continue to be identified among young adults who live in the Whistler community. The most common location for transmission continues to be in household settings.

VCH advises all Whistler residents and visitors to avoid social gatherings with those outside of their immediate bubbles, to stay home while sick, to wash their hands regularly, and to maintain physical distance when in public. All Public Health guidelines should continue to be followed by those who have previously contracted and recovered from COVID-19.

VCH asks any Whistler residents or visitors who experience COVID-19-like symptoms to complete the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) and to access testing services in their community, if required. VCH continues to provide care and support to those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the Whistler community.

#### **VCH's implementation of Phase 2 of B.C.'s Immunization – a reminder**

On **Monday, March 8**, people can **book their appointment by age group** by calling **1-877-587-5767**. The appointment booking line is toll-free and will operate seven days a week from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

To facilitate access to as many eligible seniors and Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) people as possible, VCH invites people in the following age groups to call the appointment booking phone line from the dates indicated below:

##### **Richmond, Vancouver, North Vancouver and West Vancouver**

###### **Call Starting March 8: (Vaccinations starting March 15)**

Year of birth in or before 1931 (seniors 90 years of age and older); year of birth in or before 1956 for Indigenous people (65 years of age and older)

###### **Call Starting March 15: (Vaccinations starting March 22)**

Year of birth in or before 1936 (seniors 85 years of age and older); year of birth in or before 1956 for Indigenous people (65 years of age and older)

###### **Call Starting March 22: (Vaccinations starting March 29)**

Year of birth in or before 1941 (seniors 80 years of age and older); year of birth in or before 1956 for Indigenous people (65 years of age and older)

##### **Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Whistler, Squamish and Pemberton**

###### **Call Starting March 8: (Vaccinations starting March 15)**

Year of birth in or before 1941 (seniors 80 years of age and older); year of birth in or before 1956 for Indigenous people (65 years of age and older)

Before calling the phone line, residents are asked to have a pen and paper, their personal health number, full name, date of birth, postal code and a phone number available.

#### **VCH's implementation of Phase 2 of B.C.'s Immunization Plan – spread the word**

VCH is appealing to family members, friends, neighbours and social services agencies to help reach eligible seniors and Indigenous people in the community. Please share the COVID-19 vaccination information with people 80 years of age and older, or Indigenous (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) people 65 years of age and older **and Elders**, to help them plan ahead for when the appointment booking phone line opens, according to age group. We encourage you to share the resources online (links below) or to print and distribute as needed to eligible seniors, their families and supports in your community and networks. Below are the current resources available, and more resources will be added to our website in additional languages.

#### **The resource toolkit includes:**

- **Information Bulletin:**

[\[English\]](#) | [\[Arabic\]](#) | [\[ASL\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Simplified\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Traditional\]](#) | [\[Farsi\]](#) | [\[French\]](#) | [\[Korean\]](#) | [\[Punjabi\]](#) | [\[Spanish\]](#) | [\[Tagalog\]](#) | [\[Vietnamese\]](#)

- **Website Information and FAQ:**

[\[English\]](#) | [\[Arabic\]](#) | [\[ASL\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Simplified\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Traditional\]](#) | [\[French\]](#) | [\[Korean\]](#) | [\[Punjabi\]](#) | [\[Spanish\]](#) | [\[Tagalog\]](#) | [\[Vietnamese\]](#)

- **Information Poster:**

[\[English\]](#) | [\[Arabic\]](#) | [\[ASL\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Simplified\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Traditional\]](#) | [\[Farsi\]](#) | [\[French\]](#) | [\[Korean\]](#) | [\[Punjabi\]](#) | [\[Spanish\]](#) | [\[Tagalog\]](#) | [\[Vietnamese\]](#)

- **Information for Community Partners:**

[\[English\]](#) | [\[Arabic\]](#) | [\[ASL\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Simplified\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Traditional\]](#) | [\[Farsi\]](#) | [\[French\]](#) | [\[Korean\]](#) | [\[Punjabi\]](#) | [\[Spanish\]](#) | [\[Tagalog\]](#) | [\[Vietnamese\]](#)

- **Social Media Posts**

[\[English\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Simplified\]](#) | [\[Chinese – Traditional\]](#) | [\[Farsi\]](#) | [\[Korean\]](#) | [\[Punjabi\]](#) | [\[Tagalog\]](#) | [\[Vietnamese\]](#)

Thank you for your support and dedication to keeping seniors in our communities healthy and well as we move into this next phase of immunizations.

For reference, below is important contact information related to COVID-19 vaccine.

- If you are eligible to book a vaccine appointment at VCH: call 1-877-587-5767. This toll free line is only for booking vaccine appointments.
- If you have a clinical question: first speak with your family doctor or nurse practitioner, or call 811 for nursing advice prior to booking your appointment.
- For questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, call 1-888-COVID19 (1.888.268.4319) or visit [gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://gov.bc.ca/covid19).
- For information on VCH vaccination clinics: [vch.ca](http://vch.ca).

### 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/>