



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Quick Facts about 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

British Columbia has declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency. Public health officials in the province are closely monitoring the situation as it evolves and will continue to notify the public as response measures change in B.C.

If you have non-medical question about COVID-19, please call 1-888-COVID19. You can get access to support and resources from the provincial and federal governments by calling this number. You can reach service representatives seven days a week, from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., and information is available in more than 110 languages.

For more information and latest updates on novel coronavirus (COVID-19), follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/covid19>. For the latest B.C. government statement on COVID-19, visit B.C. Gov News- Ministry of Health: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/ministries/health>

Multiple supports are available for those impacted by COVID-19. For more information visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support?utm_campaign=20200319_GCPE_AM_COVID_4_NOTIFICATION_BCGOV_BCGOV_EN_BC_NOTIFICATION

For mental health and anxiety support visit: www.bouncebackbc.ca or www.anxietycanada.com

For provincial health officer orders, notices and guidance, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance

Testing

Anyone who is concerned they may have been exposed to, or are experiencing symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat or sneezing) of, the coronavirus should use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: <https://covid19.thrive.health/> to determine if you need to be tested. Call ahead to the health-care facility you are planning to visit so they can be prepared to take precautions. In an emergency, describe your symptoms, travel history and any sick contacts when you first arrive at the facility so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

B.C. is expanding access to COVID-19 testing as it moves to the next phase of our COVID-19 testing strategy. This means that any British Columbian who is exhibiting cold, influenza or COVID-like symptoms is now able to be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test from a physician, nurse practitioner, or local community collection centre.

Individuals with respiratory or other COVID-19-like symptoms no longer have to be referred for testing by a health care provider or by calling 811.

More information on community collection centre locations throughout the province is available here: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing>

June 3, 2020



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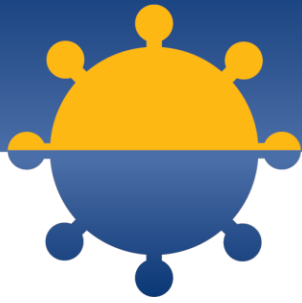


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Antibodies

When people are exposed to a new virus, their immune system creates proteins called antibodies to help protect them from infection. Because COVID-19 is a new disease, there is no indication that antibodies people create can protect them from a future infection, or for how long this protection might last.

An antibody test, also known as a serology test, looks for specific antibodies in people's blood. This test is useful because it shows if someone has had the infection in the past, even if they had only mild symptoms. This type of test is less useful for diagnosing a disease because it can take some time for a person's body to make enough antibodies to show if they are infected.

To find out if someone has COVID-19 right now, and are potentially infectious to others, a different test, called a viral test, is needed. Viral tests generally look for the presence of genetic material from the virus on swabs used to take a sample from the nose or throat. For more information, visit, <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/antibody-testing>

Self-isolation

People arriving in Canada from international travel must stay home, self-isolate for 14 days, monitor themselves and their children closely for symptoms of illness. Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance. In addition to self-isolating for 14 days, all international travellers returning to B.C. are required by law to complete a self-isolation plan, which must be reviewed by provincial government officials before travellers can return home. For more information, visit, <https://gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers>.

If you have common cold or influenza like illness or symptoms compatible with COVID-19, you must self-isolate at home for a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset and until your symptoms have completely resolved.

For more information on how to self-isolate, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing-isolation>

Staying safe

B.C.'s progress in the fight against COVID-19 is a direct result of the sacrifices and decisions that everyone has made. To continue to protect seniors and at-risk people and ensure that B.C.'s health-care system can respond to this dangerous virus, everyone must keep doing its part – at home, in the community and at work.

In addition to physical distancing, the most important thing you can do to prevent infection is to:

- Only get together in small groups of around 2 to 6 people and keep a physical distance.
- Staying at home and away from others if you have cold or flu symptoms, including coughing, sneezing, runny nose, sore throat and fatigue.
- If you are at greater risk (over the age of 60 or with underlying medical conditions), be informed of your risk, think through your risk tolerance and take extra precautions.

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- No handshaking or hugs outside of your family.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to clean your hands as long as they are not visibly soiled. If they are visibly soiled, use a wipe and then the alcohol-based hand rubs to effectively clean them.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue or the crease of your elbow when you sneeze or cough.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- If you are healthy, the use of a cloth mask is a personal choice. Wearing a non-medical mask in the community has not been proven to protect the person wearing it. Medical masks and N95 respirators should be reserved for health-care workers. Any mask, no matter how efficient at filtration or how good the seal, will have minimal effect if it is not used together with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand washing, physical distancing and not touching your face.

What to do if you are sick

If you develop cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, use the self-assessment at <https://covid19.thrive.health/> to help determine if you need further assessment for COVID-19 testing by a physician, nurse or at a local collection centre.

Visit, <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/if-you-are-sick> for details on how to stop the spread of germs, what to do if your symptoms get worse and ending self-isolation.

B.C.'s Restart Plan

On May 6, the B.C. Government presented its Restart Plan. B.C.'s restart will be a careful, step-by-step process to ensure all of our combined efforts and sacrifices are not squandered.

Organizations are asked to develop enhanced protocols aligned with the Public Health and Safety Guidelines. A cross-ministry committee of deputy ministers will monitor the process and ensure overall alignment with the Public Health and Safety Guidelines and WorkSafeBC. The provincial health officer will continue to provide input and advice as needed throughout the review process.

In some instances, this will require consideration by the provincial health officer of lifting or modifying existing orders before certain businesses re-open. Businesses and organizations that are not covered by a provincial health officer order may re-open or continue to operate but they will be expected to adopt and implement sector safety plans as they are finalized.

For more information on the Restart Plan and when businesses will open, visit,

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan>

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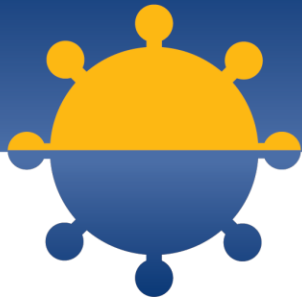


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Information about masks

Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering is a matter of personal choice.

A non-medical mask or face covering acts as a barrier and helps stop the tiny droplets from your mouth and nose when you are talking, coughing, or sneezing from entering the air and landing on other people or surfaces around you.

While non-medical masks and face coverings are helpful in containing your own droplets, they will not protect you from COVID-19. Masks and face coverings do not replace maintaining a safe distance of 2 meters from others when you are out, regularly and thoroughly cleaning your hands, and staying home if you are sick. They are another prevention tool you can use to help stop the spread of germs.

Medical masks and N95 respirators should be reserved for healthcare workers. During health-care procedures in which aerosol sprays may be generated (for example, when giving certain inhaled medications or during intubation), health-care workers wear specialized masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) to provide a barrier against infectious diseases like COVID-19.

If you choose to wear a non-medical mask or face covering, it is important to not touch your face when wearing it. A false sense of security can occur and it is likely to increase the number of times a person will touch their own face. There is a potential risk of infection with incorrect use, incorrect placement, and when putting it on or taking it off.

For guidance and more information about who should wear a mask and homemade masks, visit, <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

Information for travellers

International visitors are not allowed to enter Canada, except diplomats and flight crews and immediate family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents. As of March 21, the federal government has also announced a temporary restriction on all non-essential travel at the Canada-US border has been implemented.

Only essential traffic between Canada and U.S. is allowed: Canadians and Americans who need to cross the border to do essential work or for other urgent reasons are allowed to travel, this includes trucking, which allows food, fuel and medicine to move between Canada and the U.S.

All those returning to B.C. must self-isolate for 14 days, meaning do not go to work, stay at home and limit contact with others. Spot checks will be conducted by the Government of Canada to verify compliance. In addition, all international travellers returning to B.C. are required by law to complete a self-isolation plan, which must be reviewed by provincial government officials before travellers can return home. For more information, visit, <https://gov.bc.ca/returningtravellers>.

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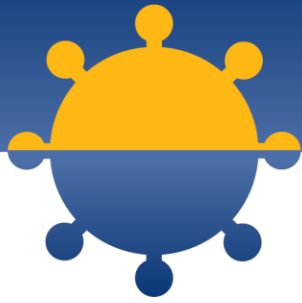


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While in self-isolation, monitor yourself and your children closely for symptoms similar to the flu or common cold such as coughing, sneezing, sore throat, fever or difficulty breathing. If any symptoms arise, use the BC COVID-19 symptom and self-assessment tool online at: <https://covid19.thrive.health/> to determine if you need to be tested.

Incoming travellers are screened at all borders – land, sea and air. Please go to the public health agency of Canada’s website for more information: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse.html#acb>

For more information on the federal government’s actions on Canadian borders, please visit their website at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/canadas-reponse.html#acb>

Public events and gatherings

The provincial health officer encourages everyone to practice physical distancing to limit transmission of COVID-19. These efforts are not forever but are important now. You can still shop for groceries and do activities where you can maintain physical distance with other people.

Effective March 16, the Ministry of Health and the provincial health officer have issued an order prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events. This threshold has been selected, as it is much easier to maintain important physical distancing to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Only get together in small groups of around 2 to 6 people and keep a physical distance.

It is important that British Columbians respect the provincial health officer’s orders. These orders protect B.C.’s most vulnerable, health-care system and health-care workers – who are undertaking a tremendously difficult task right now. They are temporary measures that will have a positive long-term impact.

For information on religious gatherings, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-faith-based-organizations.pdf>

Weddings

Marriage commissioners can choose to proceed or not with weddings, as they see fit. Marriage commissioners may require further restrictions on the number of guests at wedding ceremonies to five people; the couple and two witnesses.

If social distancing is not being practiced, marriage commissioners may refuse to proceed until the ceremony can be managed in an appropriate manner. Large weddings should not be planned at this time.

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For more information on weddings, visit, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/life-events/marriage/marriage-commissioners>

Schools

As COVID-19 spread, governments everywhere took action to reduce in-classroom learning. For most British Columbians with young children, this meant having to stay at home to look after their kids. An important step toward B.C.'s recovery is getting kids back into the classroom, so parents can get back into the workplace.

Initial health data indicates children are less affected than adults by the COVID-19 virus. Public health staff and officials will continue to review the health data. ~~The Ministry of Education and school divisions all around B.C. are reviewing options to allow for a safe return to school. This will not be a return to normal. It is expected that many kids will not return to the classroom until September 2020.~~

~~The Province is also exploring ways to safely get some kids back to school before the summer, to allow more parents to return to work. How these changes unfold are the focus of intensive discussion among Ministry of Education officials, school trustees, the BC Teachers' Federation, CUPE, and other education sector partners.~~

Parents and students will have the option to return to in-class instruction on June 1, 2020 with a goal of returning to full-time classes in September. To make sure schools are safe for students and staff, the number of students in school each day will be reduced, with most receiving in-class instruction part time. School districts will determine scheduling for classes and transportation arrangements.

For the latest information about education and K-12 schools for parents, students and school administrators, visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/safe-caring-and-orderly-schools> (available in multiple languages) and <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>.

For more information on guidelines about hand washing, cleaning and ideas about physical distancing in child care centres, visit, <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>

Child-care settings

Child-care owners and/or operators and staff play a key role in protecting children from and minimizing the impact of infection and illness. Child-care centres will need to take additional precautions to maintain the health and safety of their employees and the children they are caring for. BC's Restart Plan provides information about the province's step-by-step process to re-open different sectors. Measures that will be implemented to reduce transmission in child-care settings include:

- Routine daily screening for all staff and students

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- Routine and frequent environmental cleaning
- Explicit policy for children or staff who have the symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19 with coughing or sneezing not coming into child care

For more information, visit, <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>

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