



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A twice-weekly update for medical staff

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Medical Staff Digests are sent out every Tuesday and Thursday.

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COVID-19

NH's COVID-19 resources

For more COVID-19 information, see these OurNH pages:

- [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
- [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)
- [Physician website](#)

Provincial case counts and statements

As of September 16, 2020, there have been **237** confirmed COVID-19 cases in Northern Health since the beginning of the pandemic.

A total of **34** of these cases are considered active, and there has been **1** death associated with COVID-19 in the North. As always, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested. Surveillance reports for COVID-19, which includes breakdown of cases by Health Service Delivery Area, are [posted every Thursday on the BCCDC website](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – September 16, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – September 10, 2020

Saline gargle collection for COVID-19 testing in school age children

Beginning Thursday, September 17, saline gargle collection will be offered to school age children (K-12) at [designated collection centres](#) as an alternative to nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs. Note that children must be able to follow instructions to swish and gargle saline solution in their mouths for 30 seconds with a mask on, then spit into a vial for the collection to be successful.

NP swabs will still be available for cases where a child is unable to complete a saline gargle collection. Turnaround time for test results will be equal to, or greater than, the current turnaround time for an NP swab as all samples must be shipped to LifeLabs for testing. For more information, and prior to requisitioning for clients, please refer to the following resources:

- [BCCDC COVID-19 pediatric collection guidelines](#)
- Updated [virology requisition](#) – check “saline gargle” as the container type for respiratory pathogens
- [Instruction poster for children](#)
- [Instruction poster for youth](#)
- [Instructional video](#)

Information for schools and families will be released in conjunction with the Provincial Health Officer’s press brief.

How COVID-19 is affecting back-to-school in Northern B.C.

It’s back-to-school time in B.C. and with the current pandemic, things are looking a little different this year. A factsheet has been developed for parents by the Government of B.C. letting you know [what you need to know for the return to school 2020-21](#).

If there is a confirmed COVID-19 case in a school in the NH region, what will happen/what will NH do in response?

- More information on this type of scenario can be found in BC’s Back to School Plan - [K-12 Guidelines – COVID Protocols](#)
- If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, and were potentially infectious while they were at school, public health will perform an investigation to determine if there were any potential close contacts within the school.
- If it is determined that there are close contacts within the school, public health will:
 - Notify the school administrators, and may request contact information for students and/or staff to assist with contact tracing.
 - Provide guidance on what steps should be taken by close contacts and by others in the school.
- Public health may then:
 - Recommend 14-day isolation if necessary (for confirmed close contacts).
 - Recommend monitoring for symptoms if necessary.
 - Provide follow-up recommendations if necessary.
- Schools will provide learning support to students required to self-isolate.

- Together, schools and public health officials will determine if any other actions are necessary.
- School closure will rarely be a necessary measure to protect children. With preventive measures in place (i.e. cohorting, screening, etc.), risk of transmission in school is significantly reduced.
- Parents will be notified by public health if their child has been in close contact with a COVID-positive person; if that happens, the child will be required to self-isolate.

PPE Donning and Doffing Video

Infection Prevention at Vancouver Coastal Health has developed a [Coffee with IPAC – Donning and Doffing](#) video (approx. 35 minutes) for personal protective equipment. The video provides a review of correct donning and doffing procedures as well as the most common PPE mistakes.

When watching the video, please note there is one discrepancy between the video and current practice at NH involving the use of faceshields. The video shows that faceshields with foam headbands cannot be reused once doffed, however a faceshield can be cleaned and reused as long as it is not damaged and the foam piece is not visibly soiled. To clean and disinfect the faceshield:

1. Don a clean pair of gloves.
2. If the faceshield (not the foam piece) is visibly soiled, first wipe the faceshield with a clean cloth, soap and water from the inside to outside. Rinse and remove excess water.
3. Thoroughly wipe the interior, followed by the foam band, strap exterior and exterior of the visor with a disinfectant wipe.
4. Ensure all surfaces remain wet with disinfectant for at least 1 minute (or the applicable disinfectant contact time).
5. Allow to air dry or use a clean absorbent towel.
6. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
7. Store in a clean area.

More information on [cleaning and disinfection instructions for eye/facial protection](#) is available from the BCCDC.

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- **Non-medical info:** call **1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319** 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 webpage](#).

Overdose prevention and response

Anti-stigma resource: Compassionate Action Modules Part 2

The [Compassionate Action modules](#) are a series of interactive case study videos about stigma and discrimination experienced by people who use drugs (PWUD) and an accompanying reflection/discussion guide. The videos are based on real-life experiences of PWUD, and build on the [Compassionate Engagement](#) modules.

The modules are designed to engage PWUD and the people who provide services to them, such as health care and frontline service providers, first responders, and organizational managers.

To access the Compassionate Action Modules, visit [Toward the Heart](#).

Other organizational news

News from Across NH

Doctors of BC survey for physicians – you could win an iPad or Surface pro

Doctors of BC will be conducting its fifth annual Health Authority Engagement Survey. This important survey is looking at your engagement and interactions with our Health Authority.

Dr. Ronald Chapman, VP Medicine, and the Northern Health leadership team encourage you to participate and provide your feedback. The results will help Northern Health better collaborate with physicians to improve physician engagement.

To participate in the survey, watch for an email from the Health Standards Organization. For more information on the Doctors of BC survey, read the [full letter from Dr. Ronald Chapman](#).

Staff wellness and more

Resources for staff wellness are available in the right hand sidebar under the heading “Resources for stress and emotional support” on both the [COVID-19 page](#) and the [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit page](#) of Northern Health’s staff intranet, OurNH.

For more information on [staff deals](#), the [NH Community Corner](#), and [RAARs](#), visit [OurNH](#).

