



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

April 20, 2021

Clinical guidelines

Updated BC COVID Therapeutics Committee Clinical Guidance – April 18

Provincial clinical guidance for management of COVID-infected patients has been updated as of April 18.

The BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee (CTC) suggests the initiation of therapeutic anticoagulation (LMWH preferred) in patients without high-risk features for serious bleeding and NOT requiring organ support (defined as high flow oxygen, vasopressor support, invasive or noninvasive ventilation). Therapeutic anticoagulation should start within 72 hours of admission and be continued for 14 days or until hospital discharge, even if there is deterioration requiring organ support during this period.

A third wave of COVID-19 infections is leading to record daily case counts and rapid surge in hospitalizations in BC. A number of therapies have been investigated for management of non-hospitalized COVID-19 patients. While the current evidence remains limited, the BC COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee (CTC) is providing the following guidance to clinicians.

Inhaled budesonide 800 µg BID x 7-14 days may be considered on a case-by-case basis for adults with mild COVID-19 within 14 days of symptom onset who are aged 65 or over **OR** aged 50 or over with underlying health conditions.

- **Possible Benefit** = Inhaled budesonide reduces time to symptomatic recovery by 1-3 days. COVID-19-related hospitalization may be reduced, but this remains uncertain in the literature at this time.
- **Possible Harm** = Adverse effects associated with short course inhaled budesonide include oral thrush and dysphonia.
- **Cost** = Budesonide Turbuhaler® 200 mcg/dose (200 doses/inhaler) is ~\$75 and 400 mcg/dose (200 doses/inhaler) is ~\$110, plus professional dispensing fee.

Colchicine 0.6 mg PO BID x 3 days, then 0.6 mg PO daily x 27 days may be considered on a case-by-case basis for adults aged 40 years or over with mild COVID-19 with at one risk factor and no contraindications to colchicine.

- **Possible Benefit** = Colchicine may reduce hospitalization in 1 out of 71 patients (4.5% colchicine vs. 5.9% placebo).
- **Possible Harm** = Side-effects include diarrhea (14% colchicine vs. 7% placebo) and nausea (2% colchicine vs. 2% placebo), and pulmonary embolism (0.5% colchicine vs. 0.1% placebo).

- **Cost** = Course of colchicine treatment is ~\$15, plus professional dispensing fee.

Please refer to the updated infographic on [BCCDC](#) and the following memorandums with supporting evidence for these recommendations:

- [Memorandum – April 16, 2021](#)
- [Memorandum – April 19, 2021](#)

***REVISED* order set: Tocilizumab infusion in critically ill COVID-19 patients**

NH Therapeutics has decided to fully endorse the new recommendations from the BC CTC and amend our current order set to include a fixed dosing strategy of tocilizumab 400 mg IV x 1 dose. Clinical criteria for use remain unchanged at this time. The updated NH order set and parenteral drug monograph available on OurNH have been updated to reflect this new dosing strategy. For more information, see the following documents:

- Read the [memo](#)
- Read the [updated order set](#)

Annual Antibigram 2021 update

The Northern Health Annual Antibigram 2021 update is now available. To view it, visit the NH Physicians' website [here](#).

COVID-19

NH's COVID-19 resources

- On the NH physician website:
 - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- On OurNH:
 - [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)
 - [Pandemic Recovery Toolkit](#)

COVID-19 case counts and statements

As of April 19, **6,838** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic (numbers from April 5 are not available at this time).

- Cases currently active: **290**
- New cases: **43**
- Currently in hospital: **15**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **10**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **136**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

As well, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – April 19, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – April 14, 2021

BC announces new COVID-19 restrictions to curb transmission of virus

BC residents are facing new COVID-19 restrictions as the province works to reduce the current levels of transmission of the virus. The new orders will include restricting vacation and recreation travel outside of individual health authorities and are expected to be put in place later this week under the Emergency Program Act.

Current restrictions on pubs, bars, restaurants, and group fitness activities, as well as the Expedited Workplace Closure order, will be extended through to May 24, 2021 at midnight.

For more information, see the [most recent joint statement](#).

Province now vaccinating people in high-transmission neighbourhoods

The vaccine strategy in BC is being shifted to include communities with high transmissions, focussing on neighbourhoods in Fraser Health, Vancouver Coastal Health and Northern Health.

The new strategy will focus on people born in 1981 and earlier who are 40 years and older, and who will be vaccinated primarily with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

Read about the new strategy and [where to book your appointment online](#).

BCCDC offers health professionals a new vaccine toolkit

A new [COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkit](#) for health professionals has been developed by the BC Centre for Disease Control and posted on the [COVID-19 Vaccine](#) page.

Looking for help with patients who are experiencing “long COVID-19”?

A [provincial network](#) has resources you can use to support your patients experiencing symptoms after recovering from COVID-19.

Find the [latest post COVID-19 referral forms and resources on Pathways](#), including details for post-COVID eCase and RACE supports.

Health-care providers play critical role in recommending patients get COVID-19 vaccine

Did you know: a health care provider recommendation is a key reason people get vaccinated? In a survey of parents, EKOS Research found 91 per cent cited a health-care provider's recommendation for the reason they accepted a vaccine.

Read more to find out [how health-care providers play a role in tackling vaccine hesitancy](#).

New Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 21: Information for residents and families

The long-term care task group is continuing to produce updates twice a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[This issue](#) provides an update on the new visiting restrictions for long-term care and assisted living, effective April 1, 2021, Advance Care Planning day on April 16, and the antipsychotic reduction initiative underway at Northern Health.

Northern Health Virtual Clinic: Data on patient visits

The Northern Health Virtual Clinic supports after hours access to COVID-19 and primary care services for those who cannot easily access these services in their communities. The goal is to connect people to their local primary care home wherever possible.

Monday, April 12

- 237 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 47 primary care provider appointments (22 primary care from Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Chetwynd, Terrace, Quesnel, and Rolla and 25 COVID-19 related)

Tuesday, April 13

- 268 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 21 primary care provider appointments (18 primary care from Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, McBride, Terrace, Prince George, Fort St. James, Windsor (Ontario), Charlie Lake, and Chetwynd, and 3 COVID-19 related)

Wednesday, April 14

- 228 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 22 primary care provider appointments (21 primary care from Houston, Tumbler Ridge, Prince George, Kitimat, Terrace, McBride, Thornhill, Hartley Bay, Bracebridge (Ontario), Thornhill, Quesnel, and Dawson Creek, and 1 COVID-19 related)

Thursday, April 15

- 234 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 32 primary care provider appointments (25 primary care from Houston, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Quesnel, Brantford, Prince George, Smithers, Moricetown, Fort St. John, Chetwynd, and Lloydminster, and 7 COVID-19 related)

Friday, April 16

- 180 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 26 primary care provider appointments (25 primary care from Kitimat, Terrace, Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Smithers, Lloydminster, Tumbler Ridge, Hixon, and Chetwynd, and 1 COVID-19 related)

Saturday, April 17

- 109 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 11 primary care provider appointments (11 primary care from Terrace, Fort St. John, Kitwanga, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, and Prince Rupert, and 0 COVID-19 related)

Sunday, April 18

- 107 COVID-19 nursing assessments

- 9 primary care provider appointments (9 primary care from Prince Rupert, Taylor, Thornhill, Edmonton, Granisle, Prince George, and Kitwanga, and 0 COVID-19 related)

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

Five years of the overdose crisis in BC

April 14, 2021, marked five years since the overdose crisis was declared a public health emergency in BC. As we remember the lives that have been lost (family, friends, colleagues, neighbours), we must work to end stigma and knock down the walls of silence. There is much more to do to prevent these tragedies.

Learn more by visiting stopoverdose.gov.bc.ca

Other organizational news

Wellness and more

Resources for wellness are available on the [Health and Wellness page](#) of the Physicians Website. For more information on [staff deals](#), the [NH Community Corner](#), and [RAARs](#), visit [OurNH](#).