



MEDICAL STAFF DIGEST

A weekly update for medical staff

July 6, 2021

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Clinical guidelines

No Evidence to Support use of Ivermectin as Prophylaxis and/or treatment of COVID-19 patients

Recently, there has been several reports and publications suggesting that ivermectin may be beneficial for the prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19 patients. Based on a critical appraisal of the ivermectin literature, most data are cited from non-peer-reviewed clinical studies with methodological flaws and intrinsic limitations. Most of these trials are relatively small with *low to very low certainty of evidence* to support the outcomes. In addition, the studies vary widely in their designs, treatment regimens and duration, comparators, standards of care, endpoints, and statistical results. To date, there has not been a pivotal, well-conducted, randomized controlled trial (RCT) that is adequately powered to meet statistical significance. Based on these findings, there remains uncertainty in the benefits of ivermectin for prophylaxis and treatment of COVID-19.

For more details regarding this recommendation against use of ivermectin please refer to the [posted memo](#).

For the most up to date recommendations from the BCCTC please refer: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/clinical-care/treatments>

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

Visit the new [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) from the BCCDC, to see graphs, maps, and data showing COVID-19 case rates, test positivity and vaccination coverage by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

As of July 5, **7,802** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **34**
- New cases: **0**
- Currently in hospital: **2**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **2**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **157**

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](#) – July 2, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – June 30, 2021

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, June 28

- 66 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 40 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Fort St. John, Kitwanga, Prince George, Quesnel, Terrace, Thornhill, Kitimat, New Hazelton, Smithers, Victoria, Valemount, and Houston

Tuesday, June 29

- 71 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 19 primary care provider appointments from Dawson Creek, Tumbler Ridge, Terrace, Quesnel, Pouce Coupe, Gitsegukla, New Hazelton, New Aiyansh, Smithers, Prince George, Kitimat, and Laxkw'alaams

Wednesday, June 30

- 48 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 35 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Charlie Lake, Mackenzie, Pouce Coupe, Smithers, Terrace, Warburg (Ab), Dawson

Creek, Fort St. John, Moberley Lake, Spruce Grove, Port Simpson, Charlie Lake, McLeod Lake, and Moricetown

Thursday, July 1

- 20 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 28 primary care provider appointments from Fort Nelson, Fort St. John, Port Simpson, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Terrace, Thornhill, Taylor, Grande Prairie, Moberley Lake, Dawson Creek, Kitimat, and Sechelt

Friday, July 2

- 47 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 33 primary care provider appointments from Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, Fort St. John, Houston, Moberly Lake, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Telkwa, Terrace, Thornhill, Tumbler Ridge, Chetwynd, Smithers, and Mackenzie

Saturday, July 3

- 25 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 22 primary care provider appointments from Fort St. John, Fraser Lake, Mackenzie, Pouce Coupe, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Quesnel, Taylor, Terrace, Smithers, and West Kelowna

Sunday, July 4

- 16 COVID-19 nursing assessments
- 16 primary care provider appointments from Prince George, Terrace, Kelowna, Fort St. John, Quesnel, Dawson Creek, and Pouce Coupe

COVID-19 vaccine safety survey

The **Canadian National Vaccine Safety Network** is a national platform that monitors vaccine safety after vaccines are approved for use and is looking for your feedback whether you had the vaccine or not.

Using a web-based survey, they will collect information about whether health events occur after receiving COVID-19 vaccines.

The CANVAS network is also looking for people who have not had the COVID-19 vaccine to participate to measure background illness of the population as a whole.

[For more information and how to enrol in the survey.](#)

Questions: email vecstudies@canvas-covid.ca

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 Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **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

Update on Benzodiazepine (Benzo) Drug Checking in Northern Health

Benzodiazepine (Benzo) test strips are used to look for the presence of benzodiazepines in a drug sample, similar to the way that fentanyl test strips are used. Unfortunately, however, Benzo test strips have many limitations:

- The benzo test strips can detect some kinds of benzodiazepines, but not all. For example, they are not good at detecting etizolam, which is one of the most common benzos in the current drug supply.
- Like the fentanyl test strips, benzo test strips cannot determine the strength (quantity) or what type of benzo is present in the sample.
- Benzodiazepines are difficult to dissolve well in water. This can lead to false negatives, which can be very dangerous. More research is being done on how to prevent this.
- Results can be very faint and difficult to read.

Current state of benzo drug checking in Northern Health: At this time, we are not offering Benzo drug checking services until the concern of false negatives is resolved. We cannot ethically do so until we understand the testing process better and know how to reduce the risk of false negatives.

Sites offering or planning to offer benzo test strip drug checking: Given the limitations and risks, we do not recommend offering benzo testing at this time. Northern Health will not be able to provide endorsement or testing supplies until we know the service is safe.

If you choose to provide benzo strip drug checking at your site, please ensure that those using the strips are aware of the limitations and are counselled appropriately.

Other organizational news

Updated primary care provider case and contact management FAQ document available

An updated version of the case and contact management FAQ is available for primary care providers.

- [FAQ document](#)
- For more information on the most recent case and contact management changes, see the [June 14 memo](#)

Provincial perinatal mental health and substance use education: Sessional funding available

The Northern Perinatal Mental Health and Substance Use working group has received funding from the Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project to support education for health care providers across Northern Health.

The funding covers the following courses:

- [Perinatal Substance Use Course](#) – University of British Columbia Continuing Professional Development (UBC CPD)
- [Addiction Care and Treatment Online Course \(ACTOC\)](#) – UBC CPD
- [Not Just The Blues: Perinatal Depression and Anxiety](#) – UBC CPD
- [SafeCare \(Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Course\)](#) – Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) LearningHub

A [poster](#) has been developed to help raise awareness among staff and physicians for these courses. Print a copy of the poster, share with your colleagues, or display in your team area.

To access sessional funding and registered for these learning opportunities, email Tami.vanKalsbeek@northernhealth.ca, Administrative Assistant, Perinatal Program.

Have questions? Email [Vanessa Salmons](#), Executive Lead, Perinatal Program

To learn more about the Provincial Perinatal Substance Use Project: Visit [Perinatal Substance Use](#) – BC Women's Hospital + Health Centre

Staying safe in warm weather

Summer is here and the warm weather and bright sunshine can lead to increased risks for our health and safety. For ways to stay safe while working in the heat, please see:

- [Northern Health heatwave information](#)
- [BC Government tips to stay safe and cool](#)
- [HealthLinkBC's beat the heat resources](#)
- [BCCDC's Warm weather safety](#)

Wildfire safety

High temperatures across the province have increased the wildfire risk. Northern Health is collaborating with local and provincial to monitor wildfires in the North, as well as their impact on Northerners' health and Northern Health services.

- Report a wildfire by calling ***5555** on most cell phones or **1-800-663-5555**.
- [BC Wildfire Management Branch](#)
- [Emergency Info BC](#)
- [Wildfire Preparedness](#)
- [BC Air Quality Advisories](#)
- [Interactive Wildfire Map](#)
- [Wildfire App for Apple](#) and [Android](#)

Flood information

Northern Health is monitoring higher-than-normal water levels due to rapid melting and forecasted rainfall in several locations. For up to date information on flood conditions, visit [Emergency Info BC](#) for the latest updates in your area. More safety precautions and resource links:

- [Emergency preparedness, response and recovery](#)
- [Floods](#)
- [Clean-up after a flood](#)
- [Sewage systems & flooding](#)
- [Local environmental contacts](#)

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](#).