

A GENERAL NOTE ABOUT COVID-19 and TESTING (for staff):

The BCCDC has now made testing more available.
Testing is recommended for anyone with cold, flu, or COVID-19-like symptoms:

Respiratory or Systemic Symptoms	
• Fever (over 38C or 100F), chills	• Stuffy or runny nose
• Cough	• Have difficulty breathing
• Muscle ache, headache	• Fatigue
• Sore throat or painful swallowing	• Loss of appetite, or sense of smell

*Note that gastrointestinal symptoms have been removed from the list as these are RARELY seen in COVID without being accompanied by respiratory or systemic symptoms

Certain groups are still considered “priority populations”:

- Staff and residents of LTC facilities
- Co-morbidities
- Pregnant
- Healthcare workers
- Essential service providers
- Close contacts of a confirmed/known* case of COVID-19
- Travelers just returned to Canada
- Remote, Isolated or Indigenous community
- Lives or works in Congregate setting (or similar high-risk environment)
- Homeless or unstable housing

Note: while COVID testing is advised for symptoms in 3rd trimester pregnancies, other monitoring or treatment guidelines exist throughout pregnancy. Therefore, all pregnant individuals with symptoms should be forwarded to the NP/GP

Testing may also be recommended by a Medical Health Officer for other individuals as part of the investigation of a cluster or outbreak, or for returning travellers at points of entry to Canada.

(Excerpted from BCCDC, Lab Testing, current as of: 22 April 2020)

We are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. By slowing the spread of the virus, our most vulnerable will be able to access care when and where they need it.

80% of people who are infected with COVID-19 will **have mild symptoms** that will not require care outside of the home. **Around 1 out of 6** people who get COVID-19 **may become seriously ill** and develop difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

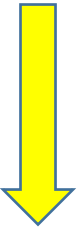
Everybody needs to be aware that the risk of exposure is not just in one place. It’s in your community, too. You need to be taking measures now and everywhere in BC.

(Excerpted from BCCDC Information for the Public, current as of: 8 April 2020)
<http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Coronavirus-FAQ-English.pdf>

If in doubt about whether or not someone needs assessment by the Provider, consult with your manager; if still in doubt, DO forward them on to Tier 3

**Throughout document, asterisks indicate items that are explained in “Definitions”*

CHANGES IN THIS VERSION:

SELF-ISOLATE & SELF-MONITOR due to EXPOSURE: Health Issue Code: <u>Exposure to Coronavirus Infection</u> – 702547000 Health Issue Code <i>if no symptoms or exposure:</i> <u>Screening Surveillance</u> – 410410006 Because you don't appear to have <u>respiratory or systemic symptoms</u> but have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> returned from travel outside of Canada within the last 14 days, OR had close contact with someone with confirmed * COVID-19 while they were ill 	
GENERAL PUBLIC ... You do not need to be tested for COVID-19 at this time. However, you are being advised to SELF-ISOLATE and SELF-MONITOR for 14 days in case you develop symptoms. For members of the general public who have returned from travel, self-isolation is MANDATORY (per federal announcement) (continue with instructions below) 	<u>HEALTHCARE* WORKERS + OTHER ESSENTIAL* SERVICE WORKERS</u> (see definitions on LAST page) ... You do not need to be tested for COVID-19 at this time. Self-isolation for 14 days is preferred, but you may be needed for work if you are an essential service provider (healthcare worker, first responder, etc.). Please discuss with your manager or supervisor to get direction related to your specific work area. If you must continue to work, you are being advised to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SELF-MONITOR daily for 14 days for signs and symptoms of illness, Wear a surgical mask <u>at all times</u> and <u>in all areas</u> of your workplace Follow infection prevention and control protocols including diligent hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment when delivering patient care (If healthcare worker) Avoid contact with severely immunocompromised patients e.g. transplant, hematology, oncology Maintain at least a 2 meter distance from others and avoid shared spaces where possible Avoid close contact with others when travelling to and from work and between shifts SELF-ISOLATE AT HOME on days when not required at your workplace If you become symptomatic while at work, finish any essential service you are providing, immediately inform your manager that you have symptoms, and request re-assessment as to whether your presence at work is still essential. If not, go home to self-isolate. Contact this number to be reassessed and for possible testing for COVID-19. (continue with instructions below → SELF-ISOLATION instructions are reminders for what to do <u>outside of required shifts</u>)
<p>(Note to staff: while time to stay home for sick individuals is shorter, the self-monitoring timeline remains at 14 days due to the incubation period of COVID-19)</p> <p>SELF-ISOLATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do stay home for 14 days – work from home, use food delivery services or online shopping Keep in contact with friends – use technology to connect virtually Do continue to exercise – exercise at home, go outside for fresh air (ensuring you stay 2 metres away from others) Do not go to work or school, public areas, or any public gatherings, including faith-based gatherings, stores, shopping malls, hairstylist/barber, grocery stores, healthcare facilities and restaurants. If possible, do not take public transportation, including buses, taxis, or ride-sharing. You should cancel any non-essential household services like housecleaning and babysitting Do not have visitors to your home – It is okay to have family, friends or delivery drivers drop off food or other necessities. They should leave deliveries outside your door. Keep away from seniors (over 70 years of age) and people with chronic medical conditions (diabetes, lung problems, heart disease or weakened immune system) Protect others and practice good hygiene – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coughing / sneezing into a tissue or your elbow Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and wash all surfaces of your hands, including between the fingers and around finger nails If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. After applying, rub your hands together thoroughly until they're dry. High-touch areas such as toilets, bedside tables, and door handles should be cleaned daily using regular household cleaners or a solution of 20mL of bleach in 1L of water Keep a distance of at least 2 metres from other people and wear a mask when in the same room Do no share person items such as toothbrushes, cigarettes, eating utensils, drinks, towels, washcloths, or bed linen 	

Self-monitoring means looking for new symptoms or signs of coronavirus infection :

- **Watch for the appearance of symptoms**, particularly fever and respiratory symptoms such as coughing, sore throat, sneezing, runny nose, or shortness of breath.
- **Take and record your temperature daily** and avoid the use of fever reducing medications (e.g., Tylenol or Advil) as much possible. These medications could mask an early symptom of COVID-19; if these medications must be taken, you should advise your healthcare provider.
- **If you DO NOT develop symptoms of respiratory infection**, self-isolation can end 14 days after the last contact or your return to Canada
- **If you DO develop symptoms**, continue to self-isolate for 10 days after your symptoms start and contact this Northern Health help line or your health care provider to be assessed for possible testing and to receive instructions about what to do next.
- **If your symptoms are severe**, such as severe shortness of breath, extreme tiredness, or chest pain, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest Emergency Department. **Ensure that healthcare workers are aware you may have COVID-19.**

More information about how to self-isolate and self-monitor can be found on the BC CDC website.

- **Self Monitoring:** www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Self-monitoring.pdf
- **Self-isolation for contacts and travellers:** www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Self-isolation_dos_donts.pdf

I will be sending a note about our discussion today to your primary care provider, and your chart will be kept on file here. If you need to follow up in the future with your provider or this help line, the information we’ve talked about today will be accessible.

For HEALTHCARE workers with NO SYMPTOMS, but concerned about WORKPLACE EXPOSURE:

If you have questions about a workplace exposure, please discuss it with your manager. If you were exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 at work, you will be contacted by the Provincial Workplace Health Call Centre (PWHCC). This typically occurs within 1-2 days of confirming the patient’s diagnosis. You will not be contacted if the patient’s test was negative, or if it has been confirmed with your manager that full precautions were in place and there was no exposure.

RESPIRATORY or SYSTEMIC SYMPTOMS, even mild ones

Health Issue Code: Suspected COVID-19 – 840544004

If respiratory distress is assessed as moderate to severe → Emergency Care required
(contact clinic manager to assist with arranging for Emergency Care → after hours, call: 778-675-5378)

Respiratory or Systemic Symptoms	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fever (over 38C or 100F), chillsCoughMuscle ache, headacheSore throat or painful swallowing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stuffy or runny nose, nasal congestionHave difficulty breathingFatigueLoss of appetite, or sense of smell

ASSESS LEVEL OF RESPIRATORY DISTRESS	
SEVERE: Fatigue from excessive work of breathing, cyanosis, single-word speech, unable to speak, upper airway obstruction, lethargic or confused	Emerg Care needed
MODERATE: Increased work of breathing, speaking phrases or clipped sentences, significant or worsening stridor, but airway is protected	Emerg Care needed
MILD/MODERATE: Dyspnea, tachypnea, shortness of breath on exertion, no obvious increased work of breathing, able to speak in sentences, stridor without any obvious airway obstruction	To NP/GP

Everyone with new or worsening respiratory or systemic symptoms should be assessed for testing, but certain groups are considered “priority populations”:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Staff (& residents) of long-term care facilitiesPatients with co-morbiditiesPregnancy (any trimester)Healthcare workersEssential service workersClose contacts of known* case	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Travelers just returned to CanadaLives in remote, isolated or Indigenous communitiesLives or works in congregate settingHomeless or unstable housing (see Definitions)
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Because you have new or worsening RESPIRATORY or SYSTEMIC symptoms:

... It’s recommended that you speak with a Nurse Practitioner or Physician about getting tested for COVID-19.

Option 1 – Accepting to Speak with GP/NP:	Option 2 – Refusing to Speak with GP/NP:
At this time I will be transferring you so that you can speak to a physician or NP, but first I would like to review some important information with you about self-isolation and protecting the people in your household.	At this time you are declining to speak with a physician or NP, but before we end the call I would like to review some important information with you about self-isolation and protecting the people in your household.

SELF-ISOLATION TIME:	
For <u>MOST</u> : Self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days, so you do not potentially spread the disease to others. You may return to your regular activities when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms started ...	For those who returned from travel outside Canada or had contact with a confirmed* case <u>within 14 days of symptom onset</u> : Self-isolate for 14 days or longer, depending on when your symptoms started. You may return to your regular activities when: <ul style="list-style-type: none">14 days have passed since you returned to Canada or last had close contact with the confirmed* case, <u>OR</u> 10 days since your symptoms started, whichever is longer ... <i>For example:</i><ul style="list-style-type: none">Respiratory symptoms appear ten days after returning to Canada or contact with case, and last only a couple of days → Self-isolate for 10 days from when your symptoms appeared for a total of 20 daysRespiratory symptoms appear two days after returning to Canada or contact with case, and last a few days → Remain self-isolated for 14 days from your last travel date
AND ... <ul style="list-style-type: none">Your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medications (e.g. Tylenol, Advil), ANDYou are feeling better (e.g. improvement in runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue)	

FORWARD to NP / GP

pg 1

If you are tested for COVID-19 and the test comes back negative, you can end self-isolation when your health care provider advises you that it is safe to do so. If you still have cold or flu symptoms, you should still take normal precautions to prevent the spread of cold or flu viruses to others, until your symptoms resolve. Otherwise:

- Stay home and do not go to work, school or public places and do not use public transit, taxis or ride shares. Do not have visitors to your home. If you live with other people, avoid contact with others at home by staying and sleeping in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if possible.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** When you feel a cough or sneeze coming on, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands. Wash your hands right away after you sneeze, cough or touch used tissues or masks. Throw used tissues into a lined trash can in your room and tie up that trash bag before adding it with other household waste.
- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. It is best to dry your hands with a paper towel and throw it away after use. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Do not share household items** such as dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other shared belongings. After using these items, wash them with soap and water.
- **Flush the toilet with the lid down.** COVID-19 virus may also be present in poop (stool or feces). Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet.

General cleaning. Water and detergent (e.g., liquid dishwashing soap) or common household cleaning wipes should be used. Apply firm pressure while cleaning. Surfaces should be cleaned at least once a day. Next, use a store bought disinfectant or diluted bleach solution, one part bleach to 50 parts water (20ml of bleach to 1 litre of water), and allow the surface to remain wet for one minute. **Clean surfaces that are touched often** (e.g., counters, table tops, doorknobs, toilets, sinks, taps, etc.) **at least twice a day.**

When you are sick, **wearing a face mask** (surgical or procedure mask) helps to stop the spread of germs from you to others. Wear a face mask when you are in the same room with other people and when you get medical care. If your mask gets wet or dirty, change it and wash your hands right away. You and those you live with do not need to buy and wear other types of masks, such as an N-95 respirator mask.

More specifics about self-isolation and other care can be found on the BCCDC website:

- **Isolation if you are ill:** <http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Self-isolation.pdf>
- **Guide for caregivers and household members:** http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/Self-isolation_caregivers.pdf

For HEALTHCARE and ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS:

Self-isolation is preferred, but you **may** be needed for work if you are an essential service provider (first responder, etc.). Please discuss with your manager or supervisor to get direction related to your specific work area.

If you **must** continue to work, you are being advised to:

1. **SELF-MONITOR daily for 10 days** (from the time your symptoms started) to record your signs and symptoms of illness
2. Wear a surgical mask **at all times** and **in all areas** of your workplace
3. Follow infection prevention and control protocols including diligent hand hygiene
4. (If healthcare worker) Avoid contact with severely immunocompromised patients e.g. transplant, hematology-oncology
5. Maintain at least a 2 metre distance from others and avoid shared spaces where possible
6. Avoid close contact with others when travelling to and from work and between shifts
7. **SELF-ISOLATE AT HOME** on days when not required at your workplace
8. **For more information, go to:** <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/covid-19-care/testing-and-case-management-for-healthcare-workers>

Sometimes people with COVID have mild illness, but their symptoms may suddenly worsen in a few days. Pay attention to how you are feeling. If your symptoms are **not improving in 5-7 days, or your symptoms worsen** (for example, if it becomes harder to breathe, you can't drink anything or feel much worse than now):

- **Call back to this number to be reassessed**
- **If your symptoms are severe**, such as severe shortness of breath, extreme tiredness, or chest pain, call 9-1-1 or go to your nearest Emergency Department. **Ensure that healthcare workers are aware you have been SELF-ISOLATING in case you have COVID-19.**

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Please stay on the line while I transfer you **to a coordinator** who will set up your discussion with the Nurse Practitioner or Physician. You should receive a call by 8 pm today (may be the next day if evening). Please self-isolate at home while you wait for that call.

For those who declined discussion of testing:

- If you decide you would like to discuss testing after all, please call back
- I will be sending a note about our discussion today to your primary care provider, and your chart will be kept on file here. If you need to follow up in the future with your provider or this help line, the information we’ve talked about today will be accessible.

CONFIRMED / KNOWN CASE: Someone who has been tested for COVID-19 and is POSITIVE or has otherwise been determined by Public Health to be a confirmed case.

- This does not include people who have been tested and are awaiting results
- Public Health contacts people as soon as possible after the diagnosis is confirmed, typically within 1-2 days

ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS are those considered critical to preserving life, health and basic societal functioning. This includes:

- **First responders** to life threatening events (i.e. police, firefighters)
- **Critical infrastructure** workers (i.e. drinking water, hydro, internet and natural gas)
- Workers who are essential to supply society with critical goods such as food and medicines
- The fact that the service is essential does not mean that *every single employee* is essential to the continuation of that service. That discussion would need to take place between the worker and their manager.

For more information about what constitutes Essential Services in British Columbia, go to:
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/list_of_essential_services.pdf

HEALTHCARE WORKER includes:

- **Individuals in roles critical to direct patient care delivery** (i.e. physician, nurse, paramedic / ambulance attendant, pharmacist, radiology technician, etc.)
- **Individuals in roles that are critical to supporting patient care delivery** (i.e. housekeeping, food services, facilities maintenance, etc.)

LIVING SETTINGS:

- **Congregate Settings:** includes work-camps, correctional facilities, shelters, group homes, assisted living and seniors’ residence (i.e. independent)
- **Remote, isolated or Indigenous communities:** includes all First Nations communities, plus communities with less access to healthcare – see list on flowchart

LONG-TERM CARE FACILITY: Facilities designated as “long-term care”, provide extended care, etc. It is highly unlikely that residents of long-term care facilities will be contacting the call centre, but staff who are sick or exposed may.

- **For example:** Jubilee in Prince George, Stuart Nechako Manor in Vanderhoof, The Pines in Burns Lake, etc.
- Assisted living facilities, group homes, and seniors’ residences are not considered long-term care facilities → See “Congregate Settings” above

SUBSTANCE USE:

- **Not everyone who uses a substance will need the full assessment.** *For example:* having an occasional glass of wine, or using Ativan by prescription are not uses that would trigger the need for the full assessment or referral to the Urgent Virtual Substance Use Clinic. The caller needs to respond “YES” to both of the standard template questions.
- Following assessment at Tier 2, callers who identify as needing support for substance use issues may need assessment by a Practitioner at ONE or BOTH of the virtual clinics (COVID virtual clinic and/or substance use virtual clinic)

