LATEST UPDATE – Mar. 30, 2021

In an effort to keep our community partners connected, we are providing you with regular COVID-19 updates.

Ministry of Health update

In yesterday’s joint statement on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, reported 2,518 new cases during the past three days (936, 805 and 774 respectively). Of the new cases, 816 people were in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region. There are 6,902 active cases of COVID-19 across B.C. currently.

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 98,165 since the start of the pandemic.

299 people are currently hospitalized, with 79 of these cases receiving treatment in ICU/critical care. Across the province, there were six new COVID-19 related deaths. The total number of individuals who have passed away due to COVID-19 is 1,455.

There have been 321 new confirmed COVID-19 cases that are variants of concern in our province, for a total of 2,233 cases. Of the total cases, 413 are active and the remaining people have recovered. This includes 1,915 cases of the B.1.1.7 (U.K.) variant, 48 cases of the B.1.351 (South Africa) variant and 270 cases of the P.1 (Brazil) variant.

Three-week circuit breaker to bend COVID-19 curve and protect people

To address rising COVID-19 case counts, protect people and communities and help break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, the provincial health officer is amending the provincial public health orders effective midnight last night.

New and amended orders and guidelines are in effect through April 19, 2021, and include:

- Restaurants, bars and pubs, all food and liquor-serving premises must only provide take-out or delivery service. Dine-in service is prohibited, except for outdoor patios. People dining on patios should do so with their immediate household or core bubble.
- Indoor, adult group fitness activities of any kind are also paused. Gyms and fitness centres are restricted to individual or one-on-one activities only i.e. one-on-one personal training.
- The previously announced class variance for limited indoor worship services has been suspended. Outdoor worship services under the current variance may continue.
- Travel continues to be limited to essential travel, work or medical reasons only. For those who have travelled outside their health region, if you or anyone in your family develops any signs of illness, you must stay home from work, school or daycare, and arrange to get tested immediately.
- Whistler-Blackcomb ski resort is closed through to April 19, 2021, to address and prevent community spread related to non-essential travel.
- All workers are strongly encouraged to work from home, where possible.
- Public health guidance for schools has also been amended to support and encourage students down to Grade 4 to wear masks while at school.

In the last few days, we have seen the start of exponential growth in new cases, hospitalizations and more people requiring critical care support. A circuit breaker is now required to break the chains of transmission in our province and allow us to safely move forward.

Gathering indoors is too great of a risk for us right now. More details on the new orders can be found here.

Vaccination update

Since the start of immunizations, 699,092 doses of Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca-SII COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in B.C., 87,289 of which are second doses.

Dr. Henry said we have been working closely with our partners across the country, Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada as well as international partners to monitor vaccine responses.

This past week a safety signal was identified among young people in Europe and although no instances have been detected in Canada yet, Dr. Henry is taking the precaution of suspending the use of the AstraZeneca-
SII vaccine for people who are under age of 55, while Health Canada gets more information from AstraZeneca about the risk-benefit profile and what this might mean to people in B.C. and across the Canada.

Dr. Henry said this suspension is an example of our safety system working and she expects to have more information in the next few days.

Updated information on who should get a COVID-19 vaccine can be found here and there is more information about vaccine after care here. More information and immunization data is available through this page: BCCDC.

**After your vaccination**

It takes about two weeks to gain protection from the COVID-19 vaccine. This means if you contracted the virus before getting the vaccine, or within the two week period following vaccination, you may still get sick from COVID-19.

Public health orders, restrictions and guidelines remain in place for everyone, regardless if you have received the vaccine. After immunization, it is still important to wash your hands, adhere to physical distancing guidelines, wear a mask and stay home when sick.

We still don’t know for certain how long the protection lasts from COVID-19 vaccines or how well they work in preventing asymptomatic infection or reducing transmission of the virus. This means that all current enhanced safety measures and COVID-19 protocols will stay in place until a significant percentage of the population has been vaccinated for COVID-19 or until it is deemed safe to relax those rules.

**COVID-19 vaccination survey**

As more British Columbians become eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, VCH is launching a brief survey to hear from those in the VCH region about the COVID-19 vaccine information they need most, whether they plan to get a COVID-19 vaccine and the information needed at the vaccination clinics. The learnings will help ensure VCH is providing the most relevant materials about the COVID-19 vaccination program in the region. The survey consists of only five questions and takes less than a minute to complete. It is available in English, Traditional and Simplified Chinese: [https://engage.vch.ca/covid-19-vaccination-survey](https://engage.vch.ca/covid-19-vaccination-survey). Please share the survey widely.

**Updates to VCH’s implementation of Phase 2 of B.C.’s immunization plan**

The age-based vaccine rollout using the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines is accelerating and moving forward ahead of schedule. The following ages are invited to call 1.877.587.5767 to book their COVID-19 vaccination appointment beginning at noon on their respective dates:

**People in Richmond, Vancouver, North Vancouver, West Vancouver and Lions Bay**

- Seniors 73 years of age and older (born 1948 or earlier)

**People on the Sunshine Coast, Powell River, Sea to Sky and Bowen Island**

- Seniors 70 years of age and older (born 1951 or earlier)

**Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit)**

- Indigenous peoples 55 years of age and older (born 1966 or earlier)

To prepare for your call, please have available a pen and paper, personal health number, full name, date of birth, postal code and phone number. There are enough appointments available for all seniors and there is no rush to call in. Call volumes are lower in the late afternoon and evening. The appointment booking toll-free phone line is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. Please tell the agent the name of the community you live in when calling for your vaccine appointment.

VCH is appealing to family members, friends, neighbours and social services agencies to help reach eligible seniors in the community. Please share this COVID-19 vaccination update with eligible seniors and Indigenous peoples along with Elders, to help them plan and book their appointment.

In partnership with S.U.C.C.E.S.S., VCH hosted two information sessions about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. Click the links to watch the information session on YouTube in Cantonese and Mandarin.
The resource toolkit includes:

- **Vaccine appointments for seniors:**
  - [English] | [Arabic] | [Chinese – Simplified] | [Chinese – Traditional] | [Farsi] | [French] | [Hindi] | [Japanese] | [Korean] | [Punjabi] | [Spanish] | [Tagalog] | [Vietnamese]

- **After-care information:**
  - [English] | [Arabic] | [ASL] | [Chinese – Simplified] | [Chinese – Traditional] | [Farsi] | [French] | [Korean] | [Punjabi] | [Spanish] | [Tigrinya] | [Vietnamese]

- **COVID-19 vaccine information poster:**
  - [English] | [Arabic] | [Chinese – Simplified] | [Chinese – Traditional] | [Farsi] | [French] | [Korean] | [Punjabi] | [Spanish] | [Tagalog] | [Vietnamese]

**VCH vaccination clinic locations**
A reminder that when you book your vaccination appointment, you will be directed to one of the following vaccination clinics. More information on the vaccine rollout and clinics can be found [here](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing). And if you would like to share these maps, they can be found [here](https://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/). For updates on vaccine clinics and more information, visit [https://engage.vch.ca/](https://engage.vch.ca/).

**Testing**
Anyone in the VCH region with cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, however mild, can now be assessed for and get a COVID-19 test. Contact your physician or nurse practitioner’s office, or a local community collection centre to arrange for a test. Phone numbers and locations of collection centres can be found by visiting: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing) or by calling 8-1-1. For more information and latest updates on COVID-19, follow the BC Centre for Disease Control on Twitter @CDCofBC or visit the website: [http://www.bccdc.ca/](http://www.bccdc.ca/).

**Other resources**
To find the Provincial Health Officer’s orders, visit: [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/current-health-topics/covid-19-novel-coronavirus)

To see a map of COVID-19 cases by local health area, visit: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/data)

For a listing of the community exposure events, go to: [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/public-exposures](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/public-exposures)

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: [http://www.bccdc.ca/](http://www.bccdc.ca/)

For community engagement opportunities at VCH, see: [https://engage.vch.ca/](https://engage.vch.ca/)