

Daily update – March 20, 2020

The emphasis in today's Ministry of Health briefing was on the need to take care of our health-care workers. Both Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Adrian Dix, Minister of Health, said front-line staff are key in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and every possible step is being taken to protect them and ensure they have the equipment and supplies they need.

Dr. Henry announced 77 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in British Columbia, bringing the total to 348 in the province. To date, 200 of those cases have been in the Vancouver Coastal Health region. Most of the cases are recovering in isolation at home; provincially, six people have recovered and received clearance from testing, 22 people are being cared for in hospitals, with nine of them in intensive care. The outbreak at Lynn Valley Care Centre remains a priority, and VCH has implemented a number of measures, such as restricting visitation and limiting staff's ability to work at other facilities.

Public Health issued a new [Physicians' Update](#) today. Included in the update:

- The time required for self-isolation of cases (confirmed or clinical) whose symptoms have resolved has been reduced to 10 days from onset of symptoms (infectious period);
- The time required for self-isolation of contacts or returning travellers remains at 14 days (incubation period);
- Patients with mild respiratory symptoms should not be tested, but must self-isolate at home for 10 days and seek healthcare if respiratory symptoms worsen;
- A test of cure is no longer required. Cases may return to their routine activities 10 days after symptom onset if their symptoms, other than cough, have resolved. Chronic cough may persist for a few weeks but cases are no longer infectious to others.
- As well, pregnant women in their third trimester have been added to the list of symptomatic individuals who will be tested.

The City of Vancouver officially declared a local State of Emergency as a result of COVID-19 on March 19, 2020. The declaration of a State of Emergency allows City staff to take additional measures to ensure the City of Vancouver has the resources needed to maintain essential services and meet the demands of other agencies, including Vancouver Coastal Health. Under that State of Emergency, the City issued an order to shut down all restaurant table service as of midnight tonight. Only takeout or delivery will be allowed, and any establishment found to be operating table service as of 12:01am on Saturday will be subject to enforcement. Dr. Henry also issued a new order as of today, that restaurants across the province must move to take out or delivery model only, in order to maintain distances.



VCH Medical Health Officers, our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada continue to actively monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. We strongly urge anyone who has symptoms —including a fever, cough, sneezing, sore throat, or difficulty breathing — to self-isolate for 10 days. To protect yourself while out in public, wash your hands frequently and maintain social distance. Testing is available for people with respiratory symptoms who are hospitalized, or likely to be hospitalized, including pregnant women in their third trimester; health-care workers; residents of long-term care facilities; or part of an investigation of a cluster or outbreak. A new self-assessment tool, developed with the BC Ministry of Health, will help determine whether you may need further assessment or testing for COVID-19. Find it at covid19.thrive.health.

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/>

