

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

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Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including influenza and the common cold.

Get immunized against COVID-19

Immunization is safest and most effective way to protect yourself against severe illness from COVID-19.

Updated COVID-19 vaccines are available free of charge for B.C. residents during the 2025-26 immunization program. These vaccines help protect against serious illness from COVID-19.

To get immunized against COVID-19 visit [Government of British Columbia: COVID-19 immunizations](#).

To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, vaccine recommendations and managing common side effect, visit [HealthLink BC File #124a - COVID-19 mRNA vaccines](#).

Symptoms

To learn about COVID-19 symptoms, what to do if you are feeling ill, and who may be at higher risk for complications, visit:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: If You Have COVID-19](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Symptoms](#)

Testing

A COVID-19 test is recommended when its result will help you and your health care provider make decisions about your treatment or care. For more information about who needs testing, visit: [BC Centre for Disease Control: Testing for COVID-19](#).

Some symptoms could be signs of other conditions or medical issues and you may need to seek medical care, even if it's not related to COVID-19. If you feel unwell and are unsure about your symptoms, contact your health care provider or call **8-1-1**.

Rapid Antigen Tests

You can use a rapid antigen test at home to find out if you have COVID-19. The results will be ready in less than 20 minutes.

Free rapid antigen tests may be available at [many community pharmacies](#). You don't have to show ID. If you can't go to a pharmacy, a friend or family member can pick up a test kit for you.

A positive rapid antigen test is acceptable for getting treatment, if you are eligible.

Learn more about how to use a Rapid Testing kit and what the test results mean:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Rapid Testing](#)

Treatment

There are some specific treatments available for COVID-19. For more information, visit [BC Centre for Disease Control: Treatments](#).

To find out if treatment may be right for you, visit the [Province of British Columbia: COVID-19 testing and treatments](#) page.

If your infant is less than 3 months of age and has a fever or shows signs of illness, they should be seen by a health care provider. For more information, visit [BC Centre for Disease Control: COVID-19 illness in children](#).

For additional information on COVID-19 treatments, visit:

- [BCCDC: Patient Information about Paxlovid \(PDF, 163KB\)](#)
- [BCCDC: Questions and Answers: Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir \(Paxlovid\) \(PDF, 180KB\)](#)
- [BCCDC: Patient Information about Remdesivir \(PDF, 210KB\)](#)
- [Province of British Columbia: Paxlovid for B.C. residents](#)

When seeing a health care provider, please tell them:

- Your symptoms
- Where you have been travelling or living
- If you had close or prolonged contact with a sick person, especially if they had a fever, cough or difficulty breathing

Useful resources

For a list of trusted sources that HealthLinkBC uses to provide British Columbians with health information and advice, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca.

For information and updates on COVID-19 in other languages, visit:

- [COVID-19 immunizations](#)

American Sign Language videos are also available.

If you have concerns or questions about your health, contact [8-1-1](#) at any time or speak with your health care provider.