

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a coronavirus. COVID-19 has spread worldwide, including to British Columbia, and has been declared a global pandemic.

B.C.'s COVID-19 Immunization Plan

BC's four phase COVID-19 immunization plan is underway, with vulnerable members being immunized first. To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, including topics like the vaccine approval process and B.C.'s plan for vaccine distribution, see [COVID-19 Immunization](#).

For non-health related COVID-19 information and services, call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319). Service is available 7:30 am to 8 pm.

Common Questions about COVID-19

Find answers to some of the [most common questions about COVID-19](#). Learn how it spreads, how long after exposure symptoms take to appear and what symptoms to look for. Find out what you can do to prevent COVID-19.

Public Exposures

With the increase in social interactions in our communities, you may be concerned about public exposures, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: COVID-19 Public Exposures](#).

For information about community exposures from your local health authority, see what's [In Your Area in the Public Health Alerts](#) page.

As social interactions continue in our community, you may also be concerned about socializing safely. To learn more about safe socializing to reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure, see:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Event Planning](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Safer Social Interactions](#)
- [BC Centre of Disease Control: Community Settings](#)

Testing

Testing for COVID-19 is recommended for anyone with cold, influenza or COVID-like symptoms, even mild symptoms. Testing is not required if you do not have symptoms. You do not need a referral or to call **8-1-1**. Learn more about [testing and where you can get tested](#).

Self-isolation and COVID-19

Self-isolation means staying home and avoiding situations where you are in contact with others. It is an important measure in stopping the spread of illness. There are a number of reasons why you should or may be required to self-isolate. For more information about self-isolation:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Self-Isolation](#).
- [Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Prevention and risks](#)

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring means paying close attention to how you feel. Record your temperature and watch for any COVID-like symptoms. You may also need to help children or close contacts who are older or chronically ill and are self-monitoring. To find out what symptoms to look for, see:

- [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Symptoms](#)

To learn more about self-monitoring, see, [BC Centre for Disease Control: Daily Self-Monitoring Form for COVID-19 \(PDF, 257KB\)](#)

Symptoms

To learn about COVID-19 symptoms, what to do if you are feeling ill, and who may be at higher risk for complications, see [Symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Reduce Your Risk of Infection

Learn more about how to [reduce your risk of infection](#).

Keeping Transmission Low

Physical distancing

To learn more about how you can protect yourself and others, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: Physical Distancing](#).

Masks

Masks act as a barrier and help stop droplets from spreading when you talk, laugh, sing, cough or sneeze. Using a mask in combination with the above preventative measures can help protect those around you.

To learn more about wearing a mask and types of masks, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: Masks](#).

Travel and COVID-19

For the latest travel advisory information, see:

- [Government of British Columbia: Travel and COVID-19](#)
- [Government of Canada: Pandemic COVID-19 all countries: avoid non-essential travel outside Canada](#)

Treatment

There are some specific treatments available for COVID-19, including a vaccine that has been approved for use in Canada. For more information, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: Treatments](#).

Most people with COVID-19 will recover on their own. Please see the [BC Centre for Disease Control: If you have COVID-19](#) page for more information about how to manage your symptoms when you have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Doctors and nurse practitioners are available to provide in-person care during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some offices may offer telephone and video appointments as well. If you need care, please contact your health care provider. If you do not have a regular health care provider, you can use the [HealthLinkBC Directory](#) or call **8-1-1** to find a health care provider in your community.

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

For more information on what you can do if you have symptoms, see [Symptoms of COVID-19](#).

Mental Health

The COVID-19 pandemic can bring up feelings of confusion, sadness and anxiety that are hard to manage. These are normal feelings when faced with uncertainty. It is more important than ever to take care of your mental health and be kind to yourself. Learn more about mental health and COVID-19:

- [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control: Mental well-being during COVID-19](#)
- [Government of Canada: Taking Care of Your Mental Health \(PDF 371KB\)](#)

Children, Youth and Families

Parenting during the pandemic can be challenging. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, you may have questions about your health and your baby's health. You may have additional concerns about parenting while your children are staying home. Learn more about [Children, Youth and Families During COVID-19](#).

Medications

As the COVID-19 pandemic progresses, changes have been made to ways pharmacists can provide medications. This includes providing refills and emergency supplies of prescription drugs. Pharmacists are not able to provide new medications without a prescription. To learn more about changes to pharmacy services visit, [College of Pharmacists of British Columbia: Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Useful Resources

There is a lot of information about COVID-19 and the province's response to the pandemic. For a list of trusted sources that HealthLink BC **8-1-1** uses to provide British Columbians with health information and advice, see [Useful Resources for COVID-19](#).

For information on COVID-19 in other languages, see [BC Centre for Disease Control: Translated Content](#) page. American sign language videos are also available.

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

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The information provided in the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Health Feature has been adapted from the [BC Centre for Disease Control: Testing](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: Symptoms](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: Masks](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: Travel](#), [BC Centre for Disease Control: COVID-19 Vaccine](#), [Government of Canada: Travel, testing, quarantine and borders](#) and [Government of Canada: COVID-19 vaccinated travellers entering Canada](#) pages, accessed July 06, 2021.

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/healthfiles or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.