

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

We appreciate that everyone is concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impact on our community. We are a group of Sunshine Coast physicians who are acting on behalf of our local physician group to share the most current information regarding COVID-19 on the Coast and to promote community-based measures to prevent infection and limit spread of COVID-19 in our community. We are also working with Vancouver Coastal Health and Public Health to help coordinate the local medical community response to the pandemic as it evolves, and to advocate for resources and support for our community.

As you may be aware, our local physicians are actively assessing and screening patients with relevant symptoms and risk factors for COVID-19 infections. We are aware of various rumours regarding COVID-19 infections on the Coast, but we are unable to comment on specific test results at this time, according to BC Public Health policy. Please be assured that any persons with positive test results will be notified directly by public health officials, isolated (usually at home), and that public health officials will contact all those who have recently been in close contact with the affected person.

That being said, we can reassure you that there are NO community acquired cases of COVID-19 on the Lower Sunshine Coast, meaning that at this time there is no community spread of the virus and no illness unrelated to travel. Furthermore, there currently are no patients admitted at Sechelt Hospital with COVID-19 related illness, and there have been NO deaths on the Coast as a result of COVID-19 infection.

At this time, we encourage everyone to act as though there *could* be cases of COVID-19 in our community. This is the mainstay of preventing transmission and containing the virus. We encourage everyone to practice *diligent hand washing* and *maintain social distancing*, as well as to *stay home if you feel unwell*.

If you have recently returned from international travel, you are also asked to isolate at home for fourteen days. If you have *travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days*, and now have a *fever, or new cough, or difficulty breathing*, you should self-isolate at home and call your health care provider for guidance on how to be *assessed for COVID 19*. If you have not travelled recently, but develop the above symptoms and are concerned about potential infection with COVID-19, please call 8-1-1 or your health care provider for further guidance.

Further information, including how to ensure you are self-isolating appropriately, can be found at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

As this situation is evolving rapidly, we will continue to provide regular updates on the Coast Reporter web site regarding COVID-19 in our community. We are also working on streamlining the assessment and screening process for COVID-19 on the Sunshine Coast and will post an update on the Coast Reporter web site as soon as we have more information.

Keep well, wash your hands, and keep your distance!

Sincerely,

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

-Dr. Jennifer Baxter  
-Dr. Herman Mentz  
-Dr. Daren Spithoff

-Dr. Ted Krickan  
-Dr. Brian Nelson  
-Dr. Marius Welgemoed