

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

Thank you again to all of you who have been doing your part by staying home, washing your hands and practising social distancing. Thank you as well to all our local businesses that have taken measures to reduce risk of exposure to employees and clients. We know that some businesses have closed their doors completely, and others have restructured their hours or ways of doing business to try and be as safe as possible. Thank you!

We know that we are asking a lot from you and we know this is going to be a difficult time for everyone who is making these sacrifices. We are all in this together and it is only by working together that we will be able to make a difference as to how this pandemic plays out. Please reach out to your friends and neighbours (by virtual means) to find ways to help each other through this. Please help support our local businesses by buying gift cards online or by phone, or by placing online or phone orders for supplies. Donate to our food bank or another local organization that provides support for our most vulnerable. Hold virtual or live stream events that help keep our community connected and encouraged. We have an amazing community full of caring, creative people, and we will find our way through this!

Two of the areas that currently represent the greatest risk for community spread of COVID-19 are grocery stores and pharmacies, which provide essential services, but are also the places that you are most likely to be exposed to COVID-19 given the volume of people passing through. Please try to limit your exposure to other people (staff and other shoppers) by ordering online or by phone for pickup or delivery. If you cannot afford delivery or you are too high risk to leave your home, please contact the Flatten the Curve Facebook group, which is organizing volunteers to provide home deliveries.

For those of you who have to be off work because of COVID-19 risk or restrictions, there are federal programs in place to help you manage the coming weeks and months. Hopefully this will help to lessen the financial impact of our current situation and allow you to manage until things get back to normal again. Please visit the Department of Finance website for details on the various programs that are available:

[Canada Department of Finance](#)

At this point in time, we do not have any patients in Sechelt Hospital that have tested positive for COVID-19, but we are treating everyone admitted to hospital with respiratory symptoms with full COVID-19 precautions until their swabs come back negative. Please continue to act as though COVID-19 is here and take the precautionary measures outlined in yesterday's community update.

At the current time, we are recommending that people do not gather in groups of more than five and that social distancing (a minimum of six feet between each person) be maintained in public. In the meantime, try to avoid groups as much as you possibly can. This includes avoiding playdates for the kids and meet ups with neighbours, as well as trips to the local pub or restaurant.

Once again, if you should develop any upper respiratory tract symptoms that could represent COVID-19, please self-isolate immediately for 14 days from the onset of symptoms. As COVID-19 symptoms can be very mild for many people, please have a very low threshold for self-isolation. Even something as small as a new runny nose qualifies. Please note that anyone who is self-isolating is assumed to have COVID-19 and will no longer be swabbed.

If you need to self-isolate, you should arrange for other household members to stay elsewhere if possible. "If you need to share a home, stay and sleep in a room with good airflow that is away from others. Use a

separate bathroom if you can. Wear a face mask (surgical/procedure mask) if you are in the same room with anyone. Avoid face to face contact; friends or family can drop off food outside your room or home.”
[Website BC CDC Health Information.](#)

If you believe that your symptoms are severe enough to warrant assessment by a physician, please call the BC COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-COVID19, or contact your local physicians office. You can also use the online self-assessment tool at [COVID19 Thrive Health](#)

If you feel you may need to be hospitalized for more severe symptoms, please call 911 if you require ambulance transport, or call ahead to Sechelt Hospital at 604-885-2224 so that the appropriate precautions can be made to protect healthcare workers and fellow patients.

As this situation continues to evolve rapidly, please check the Coast Reporter website regularly for updates on COVID-19 in our community, and tune in daily for updates on Coast FM at 6 p.m. and Eastlink Community TV at 5:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Keep well, wash your hands, keep your distance, and stay at home unless you have a medical emergency or another essential task!

Sincerely,

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

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

-Dr Ted Krickan
-Dr Brian Nelson