

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

As we flew out another patient with rapidly progressing COVID-19 symptoms last week, we were reminded once again how quickly people can deteriorate with COVID-19. Although age and risk factors come into play, it is difficult to predict who will be severely affected. We are acutely aware that the increased case numbers on the Coast over the past three weeks increases the likelihood that more people will require hospitalization and put even more stress on our healthcare system.

It really comes down to very basic math: out of every 100 people who contract COVID-19 in British Columbia, approximately six will require hospitalization and between one and two will die. An additional five to ten people will develop more severe symptoms, increasing their risk for long-term complications. This is consistent with the numbers we have seen here on the Coast, where we have now had over 100 cases.

If we keep our case numbers low, we can minimize the number of people who experience more severe symptoms and worse. As well, keeping our numbers low allows our local healthcare team to safely care for those who do develop more severe symptoms and to keep up with testing and contact tracing. It also allows us to provide care for people with non-COVID health issues, which is still the majority of our work.

If we are not careful, we run the risk of overwhelming our testing capacity, our contact tracing capacity, and our hospital capacity. This puts additional strain on our healthcare workers, who have already been running at a very high stress level for over nine months. We would very much like to avoid a worst-case scenario, but it will continue taking our whole community working together to keep all of us safe.

We are still seeing an average of one positive case per day on the Coast. While it is good that our numbers haven't climbed higher, it suggests that we have yet to contain our holiday "bump" and that we have to keep working at it.

We all know what to do, so it's really just a matter of doing it: only have members of your immediate household in your home; don't gather with anyone outside of your immediate household under any circumstances; don't go out for dinner with anyone outside your immediate household; limit off-Coast travel to essential reasons only (e.g. medical appointments or work); maintain physical distancing whenever possible; wear a mask in public indoor spaces; wash your hands frequently.

Please remember, stay home and self-isolate if you have any [COVID-19 symptoms](#). Even if you don't feel really sick, this is one of the keys to containing COVID-19.

Please arrange for testing right away if you have even one of the key COVID-19 symptoms: fever, chills, new cough (or worsening of a chronic cough), difficulty breathing, or loss of sense of taste or smell. You should also get tested if you have two or more of the following symptoms for more than 24 hours: a sore throat, headache, extreme fatigue, diarrhea, loss of appetite, nausea or vomiting, and muscle aches.

If you meet [criteria for testing](#), please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic by phone or text at 604-740-1252, or by email at coastrespclinic@gmail.com. The clinic remains open seven days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

While you are awaiting assessment or test results, you must [self-isolate](#) at home, ideally in a separate space where you can limit contact with other members of your household. You must continue to self-isolate until you have tested negative and your symptoms have resolved. If you test positive for COVID-19, you will have to continue self-isolating until you are cleared by Public Health.

If you have more severe symptoms and believe you may need to be admitted to hospital, please go to the Sechelt Hospital Emergency Department. If you need an ambulance, please call 911. Please remember that the Emergency Department remains open and safe for anyone with a medical emergency.

Keep well and please keep doing everything you can to keep our community safe!

Sincerely,

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

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