

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

This has certainly been a month of encouraging news. Although our provincial case numbers have bumped up a little bit recently, our local numbers remain low at less than one new case per day. On the vaccine front, there have been a few hiccups with the rollout, but we are well ahead of schedule locally (and across the province). Hopefully this will translate to widespread immunity much sooner than expected.

By the middle of this week, the vast majority of Coasters aged 80 and older, as well as more than 90% of indigenous elders aged 65 and older, will be vaccinated. Uptake has been high and over 3500 of our community members have now been immunized, with over 1400 doses administered last week. If you are in one of the above groups and have not yet been vaccinated, please do not hesitate to book an appointment.

Because vaccinations are going faster than anticipated, everyone 70 and older (55 and older, if you are First Nations, Métis or Inuit) is now eligible for vaccination on the Coast. If you were born in 1951 or earlier, or you are an indigenous person born in 1966 or earlier, please call 1-877-587-5767 to book an appointment. We are expecting that there will also be an online booking option in the near future.

Local physicians, nurses and other healthcare providers continue to work with Public Health and Vancouver Coastal Health to maximize our local capacity. If all goes well, we hope that all adults on the Coast will be able to be immunized before July.

Some of you will have read about the AstraZeneca vaccine being suspended in a number of European countries over concerns about an increased risk of blood clots. The most recent data indicates that the rate of blood clots after this vaccine is actually lower than the rate of blood clots in people who have not had the vaccine. For those of you who are offered the AstraZeneca vaccine, we would encourage you to take it.

Despite all the good news, COVID-19 is still present in our community and we are still a long way from reaching adequate community-wide immunity. Please continue to take every precaution to protect yourself and those around you. Please continue to minimize

your close contacts to your immediate household only and keep your distance from those outside your household. Outdoor gatherings of up to ten people are allowed, provided social distancing is maintained. Please wear a mask and wash your hands frequently. Don't gather indoors, stay local if you can, and please be as kind and patient as possible with everyone around you.

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.

With our local COVID-19 infection rate remaining low, the Respiratory Assessment Clinic is now closed on Sundays. It remains open Monday through Saturday from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM. 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](mailto:coastrespclinic@gmail.com).

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](#) 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

Dr Jennifer Baxter  
Dr Herman Mentz  
Dr Daren Spithoff

Dr Ted Krickan  
Dr Brian Nelson