

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

Although we are doing better than many other places in the province, our local COVID-19 numbers have continued to rise over the past week, with an average of two positive tests per day since last Wednesday. Over that same time period, COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths have continued to climb across the province as well. As less than a quarter of BC's adult population has been vaccinated, we still have a ways to go before we can lower our guard.

Although we have not seen any further restrictions since last week, we do need to keep doing everything we can to protect those around us who have not yet been vaccinated. Please visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions to ensure that you are familiar with the current recommendations.

As always, this comes back to each of us doing our part; if we all do everything we can to protect ourselves and our community, we can slow our infection rates and minimize the number of people who develop severe and life-threatening symptoms.

Please continue to take every precaution:

1. wash your hands frequently;
2. maintain physical distance from anyone who is not in your household;
3. wear a mask if you cannot maintain physical distance of at least two meters, or if you are indoors with anyone outside your household;
4. avoid off-Coast travel unless you are working or have a medical appointment;
5. do not gather indoors and limit outdoor gatherings to less than ten people (it should always be the same ten people).

On the vaccine front, everyone aged 55 and older can now register online for the vaccination program at getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca. By Wednesday, April 14 everyone 50 and older can register; by Friday, April 16 everyone 45 and older can register; and by Monday, April 19 everyone 40 and older can register. Please note that this registration is to get you into the booking system; it is not a vaccination appointment booking. You will be contacted by text or email once you are eligible for a vaccination appointment.

At this time, booking invitations are being sent out to people aged 65 and older (born in 1956 or earlier); indigenous people age 18 or older (born in 2003 or earlier); and anyone aged 16 to 74 who meets the criteria for Clinically Extreme Vulnerability.

If you meet the criteria for [Extreme Clinical Vulnerability](#), you should receive an invitation letter by April 15th. If you have not received an invitation letter by April 15th, please call 1-877-587-5767 to determine whether you are eligible. If unsuccessful through this route, please contact your family doctor to discuss your eligibility. Please note that you will have to wait for your age cohort if you do not meet the criteria.

Please note that our local immunization clinics will be based in Sechelt moving forward and will no longer be able to accommodate walk-in appointments. We understand that some local residents have been sent off-Coast for their vaccination appointments after contacting the central booking system. We are working to correct this, so please be patient while this gets straightened out, and do not go off-Coast to get your vaccination. Staying local will help to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 in areas with higher rates of infection and help to protect our community as well.

[Our local pharmacies](#) still have vaccinations available for everyone between the ages of 55 and 65. Please contact Howe Sound Pharmacy, London Drugs, Pharmasave, Rx Drug Mart, Sechelt Pharmacy or Suncoast Pharmacy to book an appointment.

It remains essential that we identify new infections as soon as possible. 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.

The Respiratory Assessment Clinic 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. You will only be tested if you have symptoms or Public Health has advised you to get tested.

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.

Please remember that if you are a close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19, you will be contacted directly by Public Health. A close contact is someone who spent a prolonged period of time in close unprotected contact with a person who tests positive. If you are not regarded as a close contact, you will not be contacted, but should continue to monitor closely for the above symptoms.

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