

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

For those of you who are eligible to receive a vaccine but haven't been able to book an appointment locally yet, we feel your frustration. We are working with Vancouver Coastal Health to advocate for the Coast to receive more vaccine doses as soon as possible. We thank you all for your patience; please know that everyone involved is working as hard as they can to ensure that everyone in our community receives their vaccination as soon as possible.

To that end, we will have three vaccination clinics next week: a previously scheduled clinic in Sechelt on Tuesday, April 27th, a new clinic in Sechelt on Wednesday, April 28th and a second new clinic in Gibsons on Thursday, April 29th. Bookings for the new clinics are now open, so when you receive a booking invitation by text or email, please call or go online to book your appointment.

Booking invitations are currently being sent out to people who are born in 1958 or earlier (age 63 and older); indigenous people born in 2003 or earlier (age 18 and older); and anyone aged 16 to 74 who meets the criteria for being [Clinically Extremely Vulnerable](#). If you meet the criteria for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and have not received an invitation letter, please call 1-877-587-5767 to determine whether you are eligible. If unsuccessful through this route, please contact your family doctor.

Between the vaccination clinics and our local pharmacies, we have already vaccinated over 12,000 people on the Coast, which is almost half of our adult population. We anticipate that we will be able to vaccinate more than 2000 people next week and expect that we will be able to announce further immunization clinics in the near future.

Registration for the booking system has now been opened for everyone over 30. It will be open for everyone 25 and over by April 22nd, and for everyone 18 and over by April 23rd. Please make sure you register at getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca as soon as possible, as this helps our health authority determine how many doses are needed by our community and helps to ensure that everyone gets vaccinated in a timely manner.

As you are probably aware, the AstraZeneca vaccine has now been cleared by Health Canada for everyone between the ages of 40 and 65. Our [local pharmacies](#) are currently awaiting resupply, but anticipate that they will be able to start offering vaccinations again very shortly. If you are between the ages of 40 and 65 and have not yet been vaccinated, please check in periodically with Howe Sound Pharmacy, London Drugs, Pharmasave, Rx Drug Mart, Sechelt Pharmacy or Suncoast Pharmacy to book an appointment as soon as more vaccines are available.

We are happy to report that our local COVID-19 case numbers have not climbed like we are seeing elsewhere in the province. This speaks to the effort that all of you are putting in - thank you! That being said, we do continue to average approximately one new case per day, so please continue to exercise every precaution to ensure that our local numbers remain low.

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).

Since last week we have seen stricter restrictions implemented to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in the province. As before, we need to keep doing everything we can to protect those around us who have not yet been vaccinated, especially with the new variants causing more severe illness in younger people and hospitalizations continuing to rise. Please visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions to ensure that you are familiar with the current recommendations.

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 Ted Krickan
Dr Herman Mentz
Dr Brian Nelson
Dr Daren Spithoff