

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

Unfortunately, but not unexpectedly, we have seen a bump in the number of positive COVID-19 tests over the past week, with an average of two positive tests per day. With ongoing COVID-19 activity in our community, all of us must remain conscientious and keep doing our part to keep our COVID-19 numbers down!

Fortunately, new infection numbers have continued to drop across the province, which increases the chances that this summer will bring an easing of restrictions and the possibility of getting back to some of our usual activities.

Please remember that while vaccinations do significantly reduce the risk of infection, hospitalization, and death, there is still a risk of lower grade infection and transmission. Please continue to take all the usual precautions to protect yourself and those around you. It is only by driving down the number of new infections that we will be able to open things up again; this means all of us need to work together for as long as it takes.

Although the [new enforceable travel restrictions](#) only prohibit travel between three provincial regions, the provincial health orders clearly advise everyone to stay within their local community. Please stay on the Coast unless you have an essential reason such as work, caring for a family member, or a medical appointment.

The current restrictions will remain in place until after the May long weekend, so please keep it local for the rest of the month and make plans to safely enjoy the many amazing activities and places that the Coast has to offer. Please visit www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions to ensure that you are familiar with the current recommendations.

On the vaccine front, we continue to make solid progress, with close to 3000 vaccines being administered in the past week, including 800 vaccines for frontline and essential workers. Approximately 16,000 people on the Sunshine Coast have now received their first immunization dose, which is well over half of our adult population.

Over the next few weeks we anticipate that we will be able to run at least two clinics per week, though this may vary depending on vaccine supply. All adults over 18 are now eligible to [register with the booking system](#), and booking invitations are currently being sent out to everyone 56 and older. Please make sure to register at <https://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca/s/> to ensure that you can book as soon as possible.

As pregnant people have been found to be more susceptible to COVID-19 infection, all pregnant people ages 16 and up are now eligible to book for a vaccine. If you are pregnant and born in 2005 or earlier, please call the booking/registration line at 1-833-838-2323 and self-identify as a pregnant person.

If you are an indigenous person born in 2003 or earlier (age 18 and older) and have not yet registered, please do so right away to ensure that you receive your vaccine in a timely manner. This also applies for 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. If you do not meet criteria, you will have to go by your age cohort.

As you are probably aware, the AstraZeneca vaccine is cleared for everyone between the ages of 40 and 65. Our [local pharmacies](#) are still 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 in as soon as more vaccines are available.

It remains essential that we identify new infections as soon as possible, even for people who have been vaccinated. Please stay home if you develop even mild symptoms. Please arrange for testing right away if you have 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 at 604-740-1252, or 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. If you test negative, but continue to have ongoing or worsening symptoms, please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic to determine whether further testing is indicated.

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