

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

Over the last two weeks, we have seen provincial COVID-19 numbers double again, with an average of over 80 new cases per day. As per the [BC CDC](#), there have been 50 new cases in the North Shore Coast Garibaldi region, which includes the Sunshine Coast, over the past two weeks. While this does not give us any information about our local numbers, it is safe to assume that COVID-19 is in our community as well.

Although we have not had a community or health facility outbreak here on the Coast, we cannot take this for granted. We are only one house party or family gathering away from the rapidly increasing numbers that we are seeing elsewhere in the province and around the world, and we must continue to protect ourselves, our families and our community as best we can.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of maintaining every precaution to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It starts with our bubbles, the people we have chosen to interact with in close proximity without masks, social distancing, or other precautions.

Please keep your COVID bubble as small as possible; it should include household members, and no more than a few close friends. Your bubble should not include people who are a part of other bubbles, as this expands your bubble to everyone in those other bubbles. If your bubble includes dozens of people, the risk of a community outbreak increases, and it becomes very difficult to limit the spread of COVID-19 should anyone in your bubble become infected.

For interactions with people outside of our bubbles, we must do everything we can to limit the spread of COVID-19. Maintain two meters between yourself and those around you. Meet up with friends outdoors whenever possible. Wear a mask if you are in a store or a bus or another place where you can't maintain social distancing. Wash your hands frequently, especially after touching surfaces that may have been touched by others, or before and after touching your face or your mask

If you are younger and in good health, you are at lowest risk for complications due to COVID-19, but highest risk for transmitting COVID-19 without even knowing you have it. Please take every precaution that you can to avoid being THAT person.

We anticipate that the number of new cases in the province will continue to rise over the next number of weeks and months. Although the majority of current infections are in people under forty, the more people who are infected, the higher risk there is to our more vulnerable community members.

If we do have a community outbreak, we are all going to need to step up as a community to get through this, and we would encourage everyone to think about how you can help if this happens. This may range from checking in on a friend or neighbour who is more vulnerable, to helping deliver groceries or other necessities (in a safe way), to taking on caregiving responsibilities for a close friend or family member. If we all continue to work together, we will get through this.

If you do develop [new cold or flu symptoms](#) (no matter how mild), please stay home and [self-isolate](#) until you have been assessed. Do NOT go to work. Do NOT hit the drive-through on your way home. Do NOT go shopping (unless it's online). Do NOT meet up with others. Do call your family doctor or the Respiratory Assessment Clinic (Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM) to arrange for further assessment and testing, if indicated. The Respiratory Assessment Clinic can be reached by phone or text at 604-740-1252 or by email at coastrespclinic@gmail.com.

Please note that even if you have a negative swab you should continue to stay home and self-isolate until your symptoms have resolved. If your symptoms worsen, please do not hesitate to call the Respiratory Assessment Clinic for further assessment.

We continue to test everyone with possible COVID-19 symptoms, so please do not hesitate to call if you become ill. 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 is open and safe for anyone with a medical emergency.

With respect to non-emergent non-COVID-19 health issues, all of our family medicine clinics are currently booking their own patients, as well as people without a local family doctor. Our local medical clinics remain open Monday to Friday, with the Gibsons Medical Clinic providing additional hours on Saturday mornings

In order to provide as safe an environment as possible for both patients and staff, the majority of medical care will continue to be provided virtually. This is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. If you have a medical issue that requires a physical assessment, an in-person appointment will be arranged.



If you are worried that you may have been exposed to COVID-19 after hearing about an outbreak in an area you have visited recently, the dates and locations of COVID-19 public exposures are online for each Health Region ([Vancouver Coastal Health](#), [Fraser Health](#), [Interior Health](#), [Vancouver Island Health](#), [Northern Health](#)).

Health Canada has also created [COVID Alert](#), a new app for iOS and Android that will notify you if you have been near anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 (and has the app). It is completely anonymous and does not share your location or any identifying information. It is currently only active in Ontario but is expected to be launched Canada-wide soon, so not a bad idea to download the app if you are interested in having an extra layer of protection.

Please check the [Coast Reporter](#) and [The Local Weekly](#) for periodic updates on COVID-19 in our community. As local parks, programs and facilities open up, please visit the [SCRD](#), the [Town of Gibsons](#), and the [District of Sechelt](#) websites for updates.

Keep well, wash your hands, keep your distance or wear a mask, stay local if you can, 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