

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

There is no denying that we are well and truly into the fourth wave of the COVID-19 pandemic now. Across the province, COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths have continued to rise. Sadly, the vast majority of people who required hospitalization and critical care over the past few months have been unvaccinated. Unfortunately we are seeing the same patterns here on the Coast; our numbers have been steadily rising with more than a dozen people testing positive in the past week and a half, and most people who are testing positive **locally have not yet been vaccinated**.

As you will recall, moving to the next phase of [BC's Restart Plan](#) is contingent on three things: high vaccination rates, low case numbers, and low hospitalization numbers. As we are only on target with respect to our vaccination rates, it appears unlikely that we will be opening up further in the next month or two, and it would be wise to prepare for further restrictions if our case numbers and hospitalizations continue to rise.

As you are all aware, masks are once more required in public indoor locations. Although the current delta variant is more transmissible, the basic measures we can all take still make a difference. Please exercise extra care for the weeks and months ahead; maintain a safe distance indoors whenever possible, wear a mask, wash your hands, and stay home if you have any symptoms that could be due to COVID-19.

We cannot overemphasize the importance of getting vaccinated. We have limited tools when it comes to treating COVID-19, but we have an extremely effective tool when it comes to prevention: vaccination. Not only are the vaccines safe, they also provide excellent protection against severe infection and death. The Pfizer vaccine has now been officially approved by a rigorous FDA process, which puts it on par with other vaccines that most of us have had throughout our lifetimes. With Moderna vaccine approval likely not far behind, there is really no reason to delay getting vaccinated.

From a more practical standpoint, it is becoming clear that proof of vaccination status will be required for many public activities over the coming months, and will likely be required for travel as well. We would suggest getting vaccinated.

Although we have not yet reached our vaccination goal for the community, we are steadily getting closer. As of the beginning of this week, 84% of people aged 12 and over had received at least one vaccine dose, and 76% had received two doses, which is excellent and gives us a fighting chance to limit the impact of COVID-19 in our community. If you have not yet been vaccinated, please do so as soon as you can.

We will continue to run vaccination clinics into September (and likely beyond) at various locations. Please check the Coast Reporter or the [Sunshine Coast BC Facebook page](#) for details on times and locations. If you are 12 or older and have not yet registered to be vaccinated, please register online at getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca, by phone at 1-833-838-2323, or in person at any Service BC location. You are also welcome to drop in to any of our vaccination clinics (just bring your health card).

With respect to testing, we are back to testing dozens of people with COVID-19 symptoms every day. It remains essential to identify new infections when they arise, so if you meet [criteria for testing](#), please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic at 604-740-1252, or at coastrespclinic@gmail.com.

Please make sure to self-isolate at home if you are awaiting assessment or test results. You must continue to self-isolate until you have tested negative and your [symptoms](#), but continue to have ongoing or worsening symptoms, please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic.

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, stay positive, and thank you again for all that you have done and are doing!

Sincerely,

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

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Sunshine Coast
Division of Family Practice
A GPSC initiative

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