

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

As many of you are already aware, one of our friends and neighbours at Shishálh Nation was recently exposed to COVID-19 and is currently self-isolating. Fortunately, there is no evidence of community spread at this time. Unfortunately, this is yet another reminder that we all need to maintain our vigilance when it comes to preventing an outbreak here on the Coast.

Across the province, COVID-19 numbers continue to rise, and here on the Coast we continue to see dozens of people with [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#) every day at the Respiratory Assessment Clinic. As of Friday, September 4, the Respiratory Assessment Clinic will be expanding to seven days a week to accommodate the increased volume that we are seeing. We anticipate that numbers will continue to rise over the coming weeks and months and we are working hard to expand our capacity so that everyone who needs testing can get tested in a timely manner.

Part of expanding our capacity involves streamlining the booking process for the Respiratory Assessment Clinic. Anyone with symptoms can now book directly for testing. If you wish to speak with a physician prior to getting testing or feel you need to be assessed by a physician, please let our booking person know, and a physician will contact you prior to booking you in for a test. There will be a physician on site every day for anyone who needs further assessment.

Please remember that we are only testing people who have [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#). While there is evidence that people can transmit COVID-19 prior to becoming symptomatic and even if they never become symptomatic, the current testing criteria for COVID-19 in British Columbia do not include people without symptoms. This is mandated by the Public Health Office and applies across the province, so please do not book in for testing if you do not have symptoms.

The above applies even if you have been exposed to a known case of COVID-19. If you are a close contact of someone who has tested positive, meaning that you have been within two meters of that person without precautions for at least fifteen minutes, you will be contacted directly by Public Health. You will need to self-isolate for fourteen days from the date of exposure. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms during that time, please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic to arrange for testing.

If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but are not regarded as a close contact, please continue to exercise your usual precautions and monitor closely for symptoms. Public Health will not contact you unless you are regarded as a close contact. If you think that you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and have not been contacted by Public Health, please contact the Sechelt Health Unit at 604-885-5164 to discuss whether you need to self-isolate. If you develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic to arrange for testing.

With the start of school just around the corner, we know that there are a lot of questions as to the level of risk that this entails, and as to how we can keep our kids, teachers and other school staff as safe as possible as we reintegrate into the classroom. This Thursday, September 3rd, our regional Medical Health Officer, Dr Mark Lysyshyn will be hosting a Back to School information session on [Facebook Live](#). Please log in at noon on Thursday if you wish to learn more or ask any questions. We will be providing further information in next week's Community Update.

In the meantime, if you do develop [new symptoms that could be COVID-19](#) (no matter how mild), please stay home and [self-isolate](#) until you have been assessed. Do NOT take a bus or taxi. 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 the Respiratory Assessment Clinic, which is now open seven days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, to arrange for testing. The Respiratory Assessment Clinic can be reached by phone or text at 604-740-1252 or by email at [coastrespclinic@gmail.com](mailto: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 or your family doctor for further assessment.

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