

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

It has been another trying month with this roller coaster of a pandemic. While we have had lots of positive news, we have also seen our local COVID-19 numbers jump with more than three positive tests per day, which is more than we have ever seen. We have also seen numerous hospitalizations that have further stretched both our local and regional capacity. Unfortunately, the majority of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths continue to be people who have not yet been vaccinated, even though unvaccinated people constitute a shrinking minority of the population.

This is yet another reminder of how important it is to get vaccinated. If we are going to move to the next phase of living with the virus and returning to something akin to pre-pandemic normal, we need to do everything that we can to ensure that hospitalization and death rates are as low as possible. Vaccines are safe and effective at reducing severe disease, hospitalizations and death, but in order for this strategy to work, we need to vaccinate as many people as we can. If you have not been vaccinated, please help us return to normal by getting vaccinated as soon as you can.

For those of us who have been vaccinated, it appears that a third vaccine will provide longer lasting and more effective protection. Our long term care residents have all been vaccinated, and we have already started administering third doses to people who are immunocompromised or are otherwise high risk. Frontline healthcare workers who received their shots early last year are now eligible as well. Within the next six to nine months it is likely that everyone will be offered a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine. Please see the [BCCDC website](#) for the latest information on third dose eligibility.

With respect to COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5-12, it looks like approval from Health Canada will be coming soon, as the US FDA recently approved the Pfizer vaccine for this age group. So far, the data appears promising, with a very good safety profile in children and evidence that the vaccines reduce infection rates and provide protection against severe infection in children. We would encourage everyone with children between the ages of 5 and 12 to make sure they get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine has been approved.

Please continue to take precautions by wearing a mask indoors in public places, by washing your hands regularly, and by maintaining physical distance when possible.

It remains extremely important to stay home from work, school and other activities if you develop any COVID-19 symptoms, as this remains one of our best ways of reducing transmission and reducing the load on our healthcare system.

If you do develop symptoms, please arrange for testing at the Respiratory Assessment Clinic as soon as you can. We remain open Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 3:30 PM, and can be reached at 604-740-1252, or at coastrespclinic@gmail.com. Please remember that you should self-isolate and get tested even if you have been fully vaccinated. Due to the large number of people we are currently testing, it may take a couple of days before you can be tested.

With respect to vaccinations, our numbers continue to climb, but we still have a good number of people who have not been vaccinated. Please get vaccinated if you haven't already as this gives us our best chance of protecting our community, of reducing the development of new variants, and of continuing to open up!

We will continue to run vaccination clinics at various locations through the fall. 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 at <https://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca/s/> 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.

Finally, a reminder that we are now into flu season and everyone six months and older is encouraged to get their flu vaccine!

Sincerely,

The Sunshine Coast COVID Physician Task Force

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Dr Ted Krickan
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Dr Brian Nelson
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