

Dear Fellow Sunshine Coast Residents:

We had not planned to release another Community Update for a few more weeks, but we are very concerned by the local case numbers that were just released by the [BCCDC](#), and by the preliminary numbers from the last few days. From November 29th through December 5th, we had seven new COVID-19 cases on the lower Sunshine Coast. Even more worrisome is that from December 1st through 10th, we have had 19 new cases of COVID-19. This is as many as the entire month of November!

We are also deeply saddened by news of our first local COVID-19 death this week, which comes as provincial death rates continue to rise around us. Our warmest thoughts and sincere condolences go out to all those who have lost a loved one.

We hope that everyone will take our message to heart. We cannot overemphasize how important it is for each and every one of us to do our part by following the current [Public Health Orders](#). Vaccines are coming, but they will take months to roll out and have an impact. We need to do everything we can in the meantime.

Do not gather socially with anyone outside your immediate household. You may still meet with a friend for walks, hikes, runs, bike rides, etc., but please do not let it turn into a social gathering before or afterwards. This means six feet apart at all times!

Please only travel off Coast for essential reasons like work or medical appointments. Shopping at Costco, Walmart or even Aritzia is not an essential reason. Skiing in Whistler is not an essential reason. Missing the thrill of riding an articulated bus is not an essential reason. Please stay local and support our local businesses!

Whenever you are out in public, please do so safely; wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, and maintain physical distancing wherever possible. This is the time to double down on our efforts to prevent local case numbers from rising further.

It is vitally important that you stay home if you feel even the slightest bit unwell. If you develop any new or worsening [COVID-19 symptoms](#), you must immediately self-isolate and arrange for testing through the Respiratory Assessment Clinic. Quick identification and isolation is the key to preventing one infection from becoming dozens.

School-aged children may be monitored at home for 24 hours if their symptoms are mild, but should be tested if their symptoms persist over 24 hours, or if their symptoms worsen. Symptoms that warrant testing for COVID-19 include: fever, chills, new cough (or worsening of a chronic cough), shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose, loss of sense of taste or smell, headache, fatigue, diarrhea, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, and/or muscle aches.

If you do develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), please contact the Respiratory Assessment Clinic by phone or text at 604-740-1252, or by email at coastrespclinic@gmail.com. The clinic remains open seven days a week from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

If 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. This means staying home from work, school, and all other activities 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 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, 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
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