

ISC - Alberta Region COVID-19 Update for Chiefs: August 18th, 2021



Provincial Government Extends COVID-19 Restrictions:

While originally planned to be lifted on August 16th, the following restrictions will continue until **September 27**:

- Mandatory masking orders in publicly accessible transit, taxis and ride-shares.
- Mandatory isolation for 10 days for those with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result.
- Testing at assessment centres for any symptomatic individual.

We have noted an increase in COVID-19 active cases and impacted communities on reserve over the past two weeks, largely driven by the more infectious delta variant. We want to reaffirm our support for enhanced public health measures in impacted communities, despite changes announced to the provincial approach on July 29th that included scaling back on province-wide contract tracing. We want to emphasize that the provincial re-opening plan is not mandatory and some Nations may choose to keep public health measures in place even as restrictions have been lifted. FNIHB-AB MOHs support Nations who would like to continue active contract tracing and public health measures such as masking in community buildings or at gatherings. MOHs are also supportive of communities who wish to offer symptomatic testing and asymptomatic testing for unimmunized close contacts. All are encouraged to continue to choose lower-risk activities and settings to protect themselves and others. Vaccines continue to be the best path forward towards protecting our health and the health of our communities and we strongly recommend First Nations aim to have at least 80% of eligible persons (70% minimum) fully immunized (first and second doses) against COVID-19. ISC-AB is available to support Nations to address key concerns and develop strategies to increase vaccination rates.

Returning to School Safely:

The province has released a [Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#) document to help your Nations plan to reduce respiratory illness and infection in schools. A back-to-school [tool kit](#) provides information for parents and school staff on what to expect when students head to their classrooms. Consistent with the extended timelines for easing COVID-19 measures, students and school staff should screen daily for symptoms using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#), and [must isolate](#) if they test positive or have the core COVID-19 symptoms. A detailed [2021-22 School Year Plan](#) contains two contingency scenarios for continuing student learning if there is a significant change in the COVID-19 situation in the fall. To further promote a safe school year, all eligible Albertans, including students, teaching staff, parents and guardians, are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated with both doses before the school year begins.

Question of the Day

Q: What updates are there for crossing the border?

A: With this Chief's Update we have included a detailed COVID Travel Toolkit. But as a summary as of August 9, 2021, Canada will allow entry for American citizens and permanent residents who are currently residing in the United States and who meet specific criteria to qualify as fully vaccinated for non-essential purposes. Also effective August 9, unvaccinated children under the age of 12 of fully vaccinated parents and/or guardians will no longer have to complete a 14-day quarantine. They must continue to follow enhanced public health measures. This includes those travelling from the U.S. for non-essential purposes. These exemptions apply to travellers arriving in Canada by air land and water travel into Canada. To be considered fully vaccinated, travellers must:

- have received the full series of a vaccine—or a combination of vaccines—accepted by the Government of Canada at least 14 days prior to entering Canada;
 - provide proof of vaccination digitally using ArriveCAN; AND
 - submit proof of vaccination in English or French (or a certified translation from original language into English or French).
- To be eligible for quarantine exemption, fully vaccinated travellers must:
- meet the pre- and on-arrival testing requirements;
 - be asymptomatic;
 - submit all required COVID-19 information electronically into ArriveCAN prior to travel to Canada; and
 - have a paper or digital copy of their vaccination documentation available at the border.

Alberta Cases:

as of August 17th, 3:30 p.m. MST

AB Total Confirmed (Aug 16th –407 new cases)	240,763
AB Recovered Cases	232,790
Confirmed First Nations On-reserve Cases	9,124
On-reserve Recovered Cases	8,939
On-Reserve Active Cases	92
Calgary Zone Confirmed	98,239
Central Zone Confirmed	21,471
Edmonton Zone Confirmed	79,826
North Zone Confirmed	27,636
South Zone Confirmed	13,563
Unknown Confirmed	18
Deaths due to COVID-19	2,336
On-reserve Deaths due to COVID-19	93
Variants of Concern Confirmed in Alberta	56,680

First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program (FNECP)

The program supports First Nations in identifying, investigating and characterizing the impact of exposure to environmental hazards. The FNECP program requires that primary research projects be carried out in partnership with academically trained scientists (a PhD or MSc-level) with a track record of peer-reviewed publications in the field of the proposed project. Also that knowledge integration projects be carried out in partnership with a project lead with at least a Bachelor's degree in environmental sciences, health sciences or education and that risk communication projects be carried out in partnership with academically trained experts (at least a MSc or BSc-level) with proven experience in conducting risk communication in the field of the proposed project. Full details [here](#).

Regional Snapshot

240,763

cases

41%

Calgary Zone

51%

males

9,933

Hospitalized ever

1,876

ICU ever

2,336

deaths

More Alberta case data can be found [here](#)

Useful Links

Virtual Care Clinic

Reminder: The Alberta Indigenous Virtual Care Clinic (AIVCC) is now open until 8:30pm on Wednesdays. AIVCC provides same-day care to rural and urban Indigenous people residing in Alberta via secure video or phone service and can be reached at 1-888-342-4822 or www.aivcc.ca

REMINDER: COVID-19 rapid tests

Health Canada is leading on a marketing and advertising campaign that encourages Canadian businesses to order free COVID-19 rapid tests for their workplaces **and is seeking advice on reaching Indigenous business owners and community organizations**. Current promotional activities include digital advertising, organic social media, stakeholder outreach and articles in e-newsletters (such as Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's "COVID-19 and Your Business" newsletter; and the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business newsletter). A variety of marketing material has been prepared for use by partners, including articles, display banners, social media graphics, web buttons and an infographic. Regular testing and screening of employees can help reduce the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks and protect employees, customers and communities. For more information about rapid testing, click [here](#).

Vaccine Update



A Message from Dr. James Makokis

Dr. Makokis has offered this [impassioned plea](#). We felt it was valuable to share with you all in full from a First Nations health professional working on reserve:

I have not said much about this, but now is the time. The immunization rates for First Nations children over the age of 12 are still low. Estimates are between 44-59.8% of over 12 year olds are vaccinated in Alberta. We should be aiming for 100%. What I know is this: We have a young population (often the median age is 21 in some Nations). Our population is not the same as "Alberta." We always protected our children and Elders, they are the Centre of our societies, with various levels of protection around them. Our Nations always did what was best for the future generations, so there would be future generations. Our Elders in the past enshrined the "Medicine Chest" in our Treaty for when we would need medicines to fight new diseases, like now - they thought of us today. Many of our Elders today are still scared to get immunized. I have seen Elders and ceremonial leaders contract COVID, some have died as a result. The majority of people being hospitalized, in the ICU and dying from COVID are not immunized. The delta variant is causing the fourth wave of COVID. I, and many other Indigenous doctors who believe in our medicines, ceremonies and healing practices have been immunized - because we believe in both medicines. We are tired, we have not had a break.

We have worked hard to protect our people. We need you to be immunized and to immunize your families and children if able. While Alberta will stop contact tracing and public health measures proven to work, our Nations still have poverty, excess of chronic disease (diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disease, kidney disease, COPD/emphysema), increased smoking rates, overcrowding, poverty, etc. - none of which has changed during COVID. This continues to put our people at higher risk. We should not be fully opening up our on-reserve schools during this time. Our Nations and Peoples still have to be vigilant. As someone who is 39, not fluent in Nehiyawewin, and feels a tremendous responsibility to maintain our teachings and has seen people become very sick with COVID (and limited resources to treat, also knowing the pervasive systemic racism in the health care system), we need you to be vaccinated. Younger generations feel immense pressure to carry our ways forward, we need our Elders, knowledge holders and language speakers around for as long as possible to give us more time to learn. Please get vaccinated.

Vaccine Snapshot

as of August 16th



69,026 doses of vaccine have been administered in **46** Nations (bands) in Alberta.



At least **38,883** First Nations people have received their first dose.



At least **4,585** First Nations people aged 65 years and older living on reserve or crown land have received their first dose.



At least **4,199** First Nations people aged 65 years and older have received two doses of the vaccine.



At least **30,143** First Nations people have received two doses of the vaccine.