

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: May 14, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

Please email questions about COVID-19 to: sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca

As Alberta begins to open up gradually, all Albertans are asked to be mindful of the risk associated with the activities they choose to pursue as the province move towards relaunch. Successful progression through the stages of the relaunch will depend on the collective ability to keep infection rates low and prevent a surge in cases that would require the restriction of movement and businesses again. COVID-19 case numbers, hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) admissions will continue to be monitored and evaluated to ensure health measures are achieved.

Status Update

Number of cases reported*, as of May 14, 2020:

**numbers are changing rapidly and may change after this bulletin is released*

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	6,407	72,278
Deaths	120	5,302
Recovered	5,076	35,164

- There are **32** confirmed cases of COVID-19; **8** in South Zone; **5** in North Zone and **19** in Calgary Zone. **18** cases have recovered.
- Aggregate data on COVID-19 cases in Alberta is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>.

Testing in Alberta - update

- To date 40 First Nation communities report testing activities in their communities.
- Alberta has expanded access to laboratory tests to better trace the spread of COVID-19. Testing is available to:
 - Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases.
 - Asymptomatic workers and residents at outbreak sites.
- Individuals living on First Nation reserves who fit any of the above categories are encouraged to get tested.
- Alberta has also expanded criteria for testing to include - **Asymptomatic Calgary Zone residents who work outside the home**. Testing for individuals who fall into this category is available **until May 17, 2020**.
- If you have any COVID-19 symptoms or meet any of the asymptomatic testing criteria, complete the [COVID-19 online self-assessment tool](#) **OR** call Health Link 811.

Disclosure of Personal Health Information

- The collection, use and disclosure of personal health information is governed under Alberta's Health Information Act. This Act identifies the very specific parameters under which health information can be shared and with whom. Unless otherwise identified in the Act, **community health nurses only share personally identifiable health information with other health providers providing direct care to the specific client**. This is referred to as the "circle of care" and only those in it should



have access to personal health information.

- All information related to an individual who is or was infected with a communicable disease shall be treated as **private and confidential**, and no information shall be published, released or disclosed in any manner that would be detrimental to the personal interest, reputation or privacy of that individual.

Guidance on Worship Services and Funerals - update

- It is difficult to lose a loved one under normal circumstances, and is more difficult given the current COVID-19 pandemic situation. Worship services and funerals, however, like all other public gatherings, are still very risky at this time, regardless if they are indoors or outdoors. Even small gatherings can increase the possibility of spreading the COVID-19 virus. It is **essential that public health directives regarding public gatherings and physical distancing continue to be followed** under all circumstances to keep everyone, especially Elders and people with pre-existing medical conditions, safe.
- The following guidance outlines how to ensure COVID-19 is not transmitted during this time.
 - Consider the use of virtual technologies in place of in-person services and gatherings.
 - Limit the number of people involved in worship services and funerals to 50 people or one third of normal service attendance, whichever is smaller and whichever ensures physical distancing will be maintained.
 - Individuals should use the [COVID-19 online self-assessment tool](#) before attending.
 - Individuals who are ill, or have high-risk medical conditions must not attend. Friends, family and other visitors should not touch or kiss the body.
 - Physical distancing must be maintained between people who are not from the same household at all times and should be at least 6 feet.
 - Individuals may choose to wear non-medical masks, however, it is not required if physical distancing is maintained at all times.
 - Recognizing the sacredness of ceremony and the use of ceremonial objects, we recommend that ceremonial objects not be shared amongst participants. Singing is also a high-risk activity as infected people can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets while singing. Consider using alternatives or have the singers face away from others, or have barriers (e.g. Plexiglass) that separate those singing from each other and any others.
 - Maintain a list of all participants, in the event that tracing needs to be done.
 - Services should not include providing cooked food, open food, or beverages.
 - Services must not include sharing food or beverages.
 - More information can be found at [COVID-19-Relaunch-guidance-places-of-worship.pdf](#).

Current Public Health Actions - update

- A [COVID-19 assessment flowchart](#) has been developed to determine if health care, shelter and enforcement personnel need to be tested.
- Public health teams are working with data to understand how COVID-19 cases are connected, where exposures of concern may be happening, and what measures may be most effective in the control of spread.

Alberta's Relaunch Strategy

- Alberta's three-stage relaunch strategy was created to balance the continued need to slow the spread of COVID-19, with the need to reopen the economy and get people back to work. Stage 1 of Alberta's relaunch strategy begins today, May 14, for all areas except Calgary and Brooks. Stage 1 allows some businesses to resume operations with enhanced infection prevention and controls in place. The cities of Calgary and Brooks will reopen more gradually due to the higher case numbers in these two communities.
- A list of businesses and sectors currently permitted to open or who are restricted from providing services at locations accessible to the public can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/restricted-and-non-restricted-services.aspx>. The decisions on what businesses can open and what stays closed

are made based on the advice of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, with the health and safety of Albertans as the main priority.

- A new Alberta Biz Connect web page provides business owners with information on health and safety guidelines for general workplaces and sector-specific guidelines for those able to open in stage one of relaunch. For more information, visit alberta.ca/BizConnect.
- As businesses reopen, all workplaces are expected to develop and implement policies and procedures to keep staff and customers safe. The following measures are important to protect employees and customers:
 - Practice good hygiene and thorough cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Use Health Canada approved [hard-surface disinfectants](#) and [hand sanitizers](#) for use against COVID-19 (search products by DIN number).
 - Aid physical separation through barriers (Plexiglas), signage and floor markings, and traffic flow controls to limit the number of people in a space.
 - Use personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Employers should continue to meet existing occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is necessary when physical distancing of 2 metres or physical barriers cannot be maintained by administrative and engineering controls (like barriers or partitions, floor markings, limiting the number people in your business at one time).
 - Mask use is strongly recommended in crowded public spaces, like mass transit, that do not allow for physical distancing of 2 metres apart.
- All individuals within a business, including owners, workers, volunteers and patrons, found to be in violation of public health orders are subject to a \$1,000 penalty.
- If you are concerned someone is not following the public health orders about gatherings or isolation:
 - Remind the person that not following public health orders is against the law and puts people at risk.
 - Submit a complaint to AHS public health inspectors at: <https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/> or call 1 833 415 9179 and leave a message.
 - Submit **one** complaint, **either** online **or** by phone.
- More information on the phases of the relaunch and key public health measures can be found at [Alberta's relaunch strategy](#) and [Alberta's Safely Staged COVID-19 Relaunch](#).

What the Government of Canada and ISC/FNIHB-AB are doing – an update

- The Government of Canada has announced a series of additional measures to help Canadian seniors and provide them with greater financial security during this COVID-19 pandemic. These measures include:
 - A one-time tax-free payment of \$300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension, with an additional \$200 for seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). This measure would give a total of \$500 to individuals who are eligible to receive both the OAS and the GIS, and will help them cover increased costs caused by COVID-19.
 - Expanding the New Horizons for Seniors Program with an additional investment of \$20 million to support organizations that offer community-based projects that reduce isolation, improve the quality of life of seniors, and help them maintain a social support network.
 - Temporarily extending GIS and Allowance payments for seniors if their 2019 income information has not been assessed. This will ensure that the most vulnerable seniors continue to receive their benefits when they need them the most. To avoid an interruption in benefits, seniors are encouraged to submit their 2019 income information as soon as possible and no later than by October 1, 2020.
 - More information can be found [here](#).
- FNIHB-AB previous telehealth sessions were recorded and are available at <http://www.fntn.ca>. The next telehealth session will be held on **Thursday May 21, 2020**. Information on how to register will be sent shortly.

Updates and additional information

If you have general questions about COVID-19 or require current information, please refer to the following websites which are trusted information sources and are being regularly maintained and updated.

Alberta Health – [Coronavirus info for Albertans](https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx) <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

[COVID-19 Data for Alberta](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx) <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

OneHealth - <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

Alberta Health Services – [novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx)
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>

Public Health Agency of Canada – [2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html)
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

World Health Organization – [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Indigenous Services Canada COVID-19 Updates available in several Indigenous languages -
<https://www.gotoinfo.ca/ISCInfo>
<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1581964230816/1581964277298>

For helpful advice on handling stressful situations and ways to talk to children please visit

- [Mental health and coping with COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#)
- [Talking with children about COVID-19 \(CDC\)](#)
- [Help in Tough Times \(AHS\)](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx) <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx>

Previous information bulletins and additional information and resources for health staff can be found at <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>

Mental health and coping resources are available for individuals who are struggling or need a little extra support.

- The Mental Health Help Line [1-877-303-2642](tel:1-877-303-2642) is available 24/7 to provide advice and referrals to community supports near you.
- Hope for Wellness Help Line [1-855-242-3310](tel:1-855-242-3310), 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Kids and teens can call the Kids Help Phone: [1-800-668-6868](tel:1-800-668-6868).
- Text COVID19HOPE to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to a free service supporting mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page17019.aspx>

Anyone with specific questions or concerns about their health is encouraged to call Health Link at 811 for health advice.

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