

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: May 22, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

Alberta is in stage one of its relaunch strategy and as businesses and facilities reopen it is important for all to remember that the pandemic is not over. Everyone should follow public health measures, practice physical distancing, good hygiene, and continue acting responsibly to keep members of their household, their loved ones and our most vulnerable safe. We all need to continue doing what we can to protect each other and ensure the relaunch is successful.

Status Update

Number of cases reported*, as of 0900 May 22, 2020:

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

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	6,768	81,34
Deaths	132	6,152
Recovered	5,710	41,715

- There are **39** cases of COVID-19 and **no deaths** recorded in First Nations people **living on reserve** in Alberta; **19** in Calgary Zone **15** in South Zone; and **5** in North Zone. **25** cases have recovered.
- There are **131** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **3** deaths in First Nations people **living on and off reserve** in Alberta; **63** in Calgary Zone; **14** in Edmonton Zone; **25** in South Zone; **24** in North Zone; **2** in Central zone and **2** unknown.
- Aggregate data on COVID-19 cases in Alberta is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>.

Testing in Alberta - update

- **Testing is a key pillar to a successful relaunch.** It is an important tool in the fight to stop the spread and impact of COVID-19.
- Testing enables early detection and effective isolation, and supports contact tracing which is essential to the control of spread of cases and is a **foundational element** that must be in place to ensure a safer reopening.
- Alberta's readiness for relaunch is based on its enhanced testing capacity and contact tracing ability, along with a rapid response plan in place in the event of possible outbreaks.
- First Nation communities can use testing as a prerequisite for discussions on relaunch. Each community can examine information such as:
 - What is the testing capacity in the community?
 - How much testing has occurred?
 - Are all symptomatic individuals being tested in community?
- Some First Nation communities in Alberta with high testing numbers report factors that enable high testing rates in their communities. Such factors can include:
 - Combinations of multiple strategies for testing in community e.g. drive-through testing **and** home visit testing **and** mobile testing.



- **Ensuring and maintaining privacy and confidentiality** of those seeking testing and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Increased outreach activities and community education on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and communication on updated testing criteria.
- Some First Nation communities in Alberta with low testing numbers report factors that act as **barriers** to testing in their communities. Such factors can include:
 - Fear of the unknown.
 - Fear of being identified and labeled as an individual who has been tested for COVID-19.
 - Uncertainty of having a safe space to isolate.
- To date **41** First Nation communities in Alberta report testing activities in their communities and a total of **1651** tests have been conducted in these communities.
 - Nine communities have completed 50 or more tests
- To strengthen testing in communities, communities and their leadership can examine the factors that enable successful testing as well as address factors that may act as barriers to testing in their community.
- As the situation evolves, testing criteria will change but the need to collect samples (swabs) in the community safely and efficiently will continue to be important. ISC-AB will continue to provide mobile teams, training, and planning support.
- Individuals living on First Nation reserves who exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19, who are asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases or are asymptomatic workers and residents at outbreak sites, **are encouraged to get tested**.
- If you have any COVID-19 symptom or meet any of the asymptomatic testing criteria, complete the [COVID-19 online self-assessment tool](#) **OR** call Health Link 811.

Alberta's Relaunch Strategy

- Stage one of Alberta's relaunch strategy has begun across the province except in the cities of Calgary and Brooks. Cities of Calgary and Brooks will reopen more gradually due to higher case numbers.
- Stage 1 allows some businesses to open. Alberta has developed a planning template tool to help businesses identify actions they can take to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The use of this template is voluntary. More information can be found at [Relaunch plan template for businesses](#).
- Some public health restrictions have been lifted in stage 1; however there are public health restrictions that will continue throughout stage 1, these include:
 - Gatherings of **up to 15 people indoors or up to 50 people outdoors is permitted**, unless otherwise identified in public health orders or guidance, such as workplaces, places of worship or in restaurants.
 - Gatherings under these limits must follow physical distancing and other guidance.
 - Physical distance of two metres must remain between people from different households.
 - Attendees must follow proper hygiene practices.
 - Attendees should not share food or drinks.
 - Public attendance at businesses, facilities and events that have close physical contact is not permitted, including: arts and culture festivals, major sporting events and concerts.
 - Movie theatres, pools, recreation centres, arenas, spas, nightclubs and gyms will remain closed.
 - Visiting patients in health care facilities will remain limited.
 - In-school classes for kindergarten to Grade 12 students will remain prohibited.
- Non-essential travel, especially travel outside the province, is not recommended.
- First Nations communities in Alberta will reopen or relaunch in different ways at different times, in accordance with decisions made by community leadership.
- More information on the phases of the Alberta's 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 \$75 million in additional funding for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off reserve. More information about this funding will be available soon.
- The Government of Canada has extended the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) by an additional 12 weeks to August 29, 2020, to support employers and workers hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic including Indigenous government-owned corporations that are carrying on a business, as well as partnerships where the partners are Indigenous governments and eligible employers. More information on eligibility and how to apply can be found at [Canada-emergency-wage-subsidy](#).
- In addition to the one-time payment of \$300 per child more in the May installment, the Canadian Child Benefit (CCB) will be increased once again in July, to keep up with the costs of living. The increase will be in place for the 2020-21 benefit year, and will raise the maximum benefit to \$6,765 per child under age 6, and \$5,708 per child aged 6 through 17. More information available 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 28, 2020**. Information on how to register will be sent shortly.

Additional updates

- The First Nations Health Managers Association have developed **InfoPoint**, a phone and email help desk which provides First Nations Health managers with links to useful information related to Covid-19. It is a single point of contact for credible and reliable information on COVID-19 including funding supports updates and responses by the government. Please email InfoPoint@fnhma.ca or call 1-855-446-2719 for any information requests.

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>

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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