

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19):

Weekly Bulletin to First Nations in Alberta: May 28, 2020

Office of the Senior Medical Officer of Health

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

The number of new cases of COVID-19 in the province is on a downwards trend, and stage one of Alberta's relaunch strategy is underway as the province continues to open up with strict safety guidelines in place. The public health response is succeeding in the efforts to lower the spread of the COVID-19; however COVID-19 cases continue to be reported and it is too early to see the full impact of the relaunch. The coming days and weeks remain critical; progress will depend on our ability to keep infection rates low as public health measures are relaxed.

Status Update

Number of cases reported *, as of May 28, 2020:

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

	Alberta (Alberta Health)	Canada (Public Health Agency of Canada)
Cases	6,926	87,519
Deaths	141	6,765
Recovered	6,106	46,164

- There are **679 active cases** of COVID 19 in Alberta, the lowest number since March 30.
- There are **40** cases of COVID-19 and **no deaths** recorded in First Nations people **living on reserve** in Alberta; **19** in Calgary Zone; **16** in South Zone; and **5** in North Zone. **31** cases have recovered.
- There are **146** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **3** deaths in First Nations people **living on and off reserve** in Alberta; **66** in Calgary Zone; **14** in Edmonton Zone; **31** in South Zone; **31** 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

- Alberta has expanded testing to any person with COVID-19 symptoms, and asymptomatic individuals in outbreak locations or health care facilities, to better trace the spread of COVID-19. Testing is available to:
 - Any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.
 - **All** close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases; this includes symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.
 - **All** workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites; this includes symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.
 - **All** workers and residents at long-term care and level 4 supportive living facilities; this includes symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.
 - **All** patients admitted to continuing care or transferred between continuing care and hospital settings; this includes symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals.



- FNIHB-AB is working with the province to provide asymptomatic testing in First Nation communities that:
 - Have COVID-19 outbreaks.
 - Are located close to COVID-19 hotspot areas.
 - Are working on initiating their relaunch.
- This asymptomatic testing is generally time limited, and should be planned out with ISC-AB Nursing and CDC; there are issues with asymptomatic testing, particularly in populations with a low risk of the disease (a higher rate of false positive test results).
- Individuals living on First Nation reserves who exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19, or meet any of the asymptomatic testing criteria **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

- Several businesses in Calgary and Brooks have begun to reopen as these cities enter stage one of their relaunch.
- An updated 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.
- Businesses allowed to reopen during stage one are subject to strict infection prevention and control measures, and will be carefully monitored for compliance with public health orders. It is up to each business operator to determine if they are ready to open and ensure all guidance has been met.
- The [Alberta.ca/BizConnect](#) web page has health and safety guidelines for general workplaces, and sector-specific guidelines for those able to open in stage one of relaunch. Businesses are encouraged to check the page for new and updated guidance documents.
- During the pandemic response, public health measures and restrictions were put in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. As Alberta gradually reopens, these restrictions will be lifted progressively across each stage of the relaunch. Some public health restrictions have been lifted in stage one, however there are restrictions that **remain in place**. Some restrictions are expected to remain through all the stages of relaunch.
- It is recommended that individuals over 60 or those with pre-existing health conditions should continue limiting contact with people outside their immediate household and staying home as much as possible. If you do go out, do so carefully.
- Progression to stage two of the relaunch will be determined by the success of stage one, considering health-care system capacity, hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) cases, and infection rates.
- More information on the phases of 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

- In addition to other supports provided, ISC-AB Alberta technical team has developed a specific checklist for facilities that First Nation communities can consider using when re-opening facilities in their community. This checklist is being sent along with this week's bulletin.
- ISC-FNIHB provided support to Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation, for their #ProtectOurElders campaign, a social media campaign that aims to educate and motivate Indigenous youth to adhere to public health measures during COVID-19. The campaign launches today Thursday May 28; find the videos [here](#) and learn more at www.protectourelders.ca
- FNIHB-AB Nursing and CDC team, including MOHs, are working with community health staff to ensure all communities can access testing locally.

- FNIHB-AB previous telehealth sessions were recorded and are available at <http://www.fntn.ca>. The next telehealth session will be held on **Thursday June 4, 2020**. Information on how to register will be sent shortly.

Additional updates

- The Canadian Red Cross has established a help desk to support First Nation communities with Health Emergency planning and technical assistance. The Help Desk is launched in coordination with other Indigenous help desks, such as the First Nations Health Managers Association's **InfoPoint** (<https://ihtoday.ca/infopoint-by-fnhma/>). The Red Cross help desk can be reached at 1-833-937-1597 for any information requests.
- Breakfast Club of Canada continues to fund special COVID related applications to fund emergency food programs. The application process takes 5-10 minutes and you are able to submit a second application even if you have already received initial funds. Please visit <https://www.breakfastclubcanada.org/covid-special-grant-application/>

Quick facts

- Physical distancing requirements of two meters are expected to remain in place through all stages of relaunch.
- Hygiene practices will continue to be required of businesses and individuals, along with instructions for individuals to stay home when exhibiting symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat.
- There is no information or evidence that suggests that COVID-19 is transmitted by mosquitoes. It is a respiratory virus that is spread through droplets in an infected person's saliva/nasal discharge when they cough, sneeze or talk.
- Individuals are encouraged to wear non-medical masks when out in public places where keeping a distance of two metres is difficult.
- The most important measure we can take to prevent respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, is to practice good hygiene. This includes:
 - Washing your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds.
 - Avoiding touching your face.
 - Coughing or sneezing into your elbow or sleeve, and
 - Disposing of tissues appropriately.

Mental Health and Wellness

- Text4Hope originally launched in March to help those looking for support during the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is expanding to reach more Albertans. **Text4Hope-Addiction Support** and **Text4Hope-Cancer Care** are designed to help Albertans dealing with psychological issues related to addiction and cancer issues.
 - Text "Open2Change" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to the addiction program.
 - Text "CancerCare" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to the cancer program.
 - Text "COVID19HOPE" to [393939](tel:393939) to subscribe to supports for mental health and wellness in a time of stress and isolation.
- Other resources are also available if you, or someone you know, is struggling or needs a little extra support. Supports and resources are also available for children. These resources can be found through the **OneHealth** website at <https://www.onehealth.ca/ab/ABCovid-19>.

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>

Public Health Agency of Canada – 2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update
<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](https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/amh/Page16759.aspx) (AHS) <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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