

# COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS) July 16

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# COVID-19 – THE DISEASE, SYMPTOMS, ITS SPREAD AND PRECAUTIONS

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Mild symptoms are similar to influenza and other respiratory illnesses.
  - Common symptoms: cough, fever (over 38°C), shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.
  - Other symptoms can include: stuffy nose, painful swallowing, headache, chills, muscle or joint aches, feeling unwell in general, new fatigue or severe exhaustion, gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite), loss of sense of smell or taste, conjunctivitis (pink eye).
  - Most people recover without medical treatment.
- Serious symptoms include difficulty breathing or pneumonia.
- Older people and those with other medical problems are more likely to develop serious symptoms.
  - There is a risk of death in severe cases.
- Symptoms may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to COVID-19.

## How does COVID-19 spread?

- Infected people spread the virus through tiny droplets when they:
  - These droplets spread by:
    - cough, sneeze, talk, laugh, and sing
- You can get infected if you touch objects or surfaces the virus has landed on (bath towels, kitchen utensils, door knobs, etc.) and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- People who have COVID-19 can spread it to others before they start to feel sick.

## Can COVID-19 be spread through the air?

- Current evidence shows the droplets don't stay in the air long and won't go very far. But if you are too close to someone with COVID-19, you can get sick by breathing in air that contains droplets with the virus.

## How long can the virus live on an object or surface?

- We think the virus generally only survives for a few hours on a surface or object, but it could survive several days under some conditions.

## Who is most likely to experience severe symptoms?

- All Albertans are at risk of contracting COVID-19, and anyone can experience severe outcomes.
- Those more likely to experience severe outcomes include Albertans who:
  - are over the age of 70
  - have underlying medical conditions (heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)

## How do we protect at-risk Albertans?

- All Albertans can help protect themselves and others from COVID-19 by practicing good hygiene, maintaining physical distancing, wearing a mask in public, getting tested and monitoring for symptoms. Learn more at [alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread](https://alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread).

- We are working with partners across Alberta to keep strong measures in place to protect Albertans from COVID-19, including those most at-risk. Learn more at [alberta.ca/protecting-at-risk-albertans-from-covid-19](https://alberta.ca/protecting-at-risk-albertans-from-covid-19).

### Can COVID-19 be spread by a person who has no symptoms?

- Because the disease spreads through respiratory droplets, the risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms is low. People with mild symptoms may feel well but they can still infect others. However, for many people, symptoms may be very mild. In these cases, transmission is possible – even if the person is feeling well and only experiencing a mild cough, for example.

### What is the difference between “probable” cases and “confirmed” cases of COVID-19?

- Confirmed cases have been tested. Probable cases have not been tested but those people show symptoms and were in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

### We’ve been told there is a case in a specific place. Is this accurate? Can you confirm?

- We cannot comment on any specific case due to patient confidentiality. We take patient confidentiality seriously and are taking steps to balance confidentiality with the public interest.
- As soon as a test is positive, local health officials take immediate action to protect the health of everyone involved and prevent the virus from spreading. They immediately isolate the individual and begin contact tracing to identify anyone who may have been exposed.
- AHS directly contacts anyone at risk and requires they isolate. If you are not contacted, you are not at risk.
- Download the [ABTraceTogether](#) app and use it when you are in public, it will help us trace your risk.
- More information on COVID-19 statistics can be found online at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-alberta-data.aspx>

### How is the virus transmitted?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a list of questions and answers about COVID-19, how it spreads and how it is affecting people worldwide. It is available at: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>.
- Visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19) for the latest information on the situation in Alberta.

### Can COVID-19 be transmitted through mosquito bites?

- So far there is no information or evidence to suggest that mosquitoes could carry COVID-19. It is a respiratory virus that spreads primarily through droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose.

### Should people take ibuprofen for COVID-19 symptoms?

- Currently, there is no scientific evidence to indicate ibuprofen could make COVID-19 symptoms worse, beyond the usual known side effects that limit the use of ibuprofen in certain populations.
- Until we have more information, people may wish to take paracetamol/acetaminophen to treat COVID-19 symptoms, unless your doctor has told you paracetamol/acetaminophen is not suitable for you.
- Those already taking ibuprofen for other conditions should not stop without consulting a doctor.

## Is Alberta conducting any clinical trials to test the effectiveness of treatments on people diagnosed with COVID-19?

- Yes. There are a number of clinical trials occurring in the province; however, in the interest of patient safety, trials using Hydroxychloroquine have been suspended in Alberta until new evidence can be evaluated. Here are a few examples of trials underway in the province:
  - The World Health Organization's Solidarity trial, known as CATCO in Canada, is treating hospitalized patients with Lopinavir/ritonavir or Remdesivir. Hydroxychloroquine has been removed as a treatment option for this trial.
  - A national study is looking into the use of convalescent plasma obtained from patients who have survived a COVID-19 infection as a treatment for other patients. The ConCor-1 trial is receiving plasma donations in Edmonton and Calgary and is going to start recruiting patients for treatment in Edmonton.
  - The Alberta HOPE COVID-19 study was looking at the use of Hydroxychloroquine for newly COVID-19 diagnosed Albertans. This trial has been put on hold until the research team can evaluate the evidence and make a decision about continuing this trial.

## ABTRACETOGETHER MOBILE APP

### What is ABTraceTogether?

- [ABTraceTogether](#) is a mobile app that enables community-driven contact tracing to support efforts to fight COVID-19. It enhances manual contact tracing completed by public health officials.
- The use of the app is completely voluntary.

### How does the ABTraceTogether app work?

- The ABTraceTogether app uses a secure, community-driven approach. Mobile devices exchange Bluetooth-enabled secure encrypted tokens when they detect another device nearby with the app installed. No other information is shared.
- If a person using the app tests positive for COVID-19, AHS contact tracers can use the encrypted data to reach out to other app users who have been in close contact with the infected person.

### How do I use the ABTraceTogether app?

- You can use the ABTraceTogether app by downloading it from your app store on any mobile device you regularly use.
- After set up is complete:
  - Android devices: Keep Bluetooth turned on and the app open in the background when you go out.
  - iOS devices/iPhones: Keep Bluetooth turned on and the app in the foreground in Power Saver mode when you go out.

### What sort of data – especially my personal data – is gathered via the app?

- During set up, the only personal data collected is your mobile number, so Alberta Health Services (AHS) can contact you quickly if you were in close proximity to a COVID-19 case.

- With your consent, the ABTraceTogether app exchanges Bluetooth proximity data with nearby phones running the same app. This data is encrypted and made anonymous. It does not reveal your identity or the other person's identity. To measure distance, information about your phone model and the signal strength recorded is also shared, since different phone models transmit at a different power.
- This data is stored only on your phone, and is not shared with AHS. Should AHS need the data for contact tracing, they will ask you directly to share it with them and enable an upload of your contact tracing logs.
- The ABTraceTogether app also collects anonymized app utilization data to improve the app across different phone models, and to provide a better experience to users.
- If you have any questions about how your personal information is being used, contact [hiahelpdesk@gov.ab.ca](mailto:hiahelpdesk@gov.ab.ca)

## TESTING

### Who is getting tested for COVID-19?

- Testing is available to all Albertans, whether they have COVID-19 symptoms or not.
- The following groups will continue to receive priority for testing:
  - any person exhibiting any symptom of COVID-19
  - all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
  - all workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites all workers and residents at long-term care and level 4 supportive living facilities (testing will be rolled out starting the week of May 25 and may not be offered at some locations right away)
  - all patients admitted to continuing care or transferred between continuing care and hospital settings
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to examine and adjust testing protocols and access to tests based on the changing situation in Alberta.
- People can access testing by completing the COVID-19 [self-assessment online](#).
- A separate [self-assessment tool](#) is available for health care and shelter workers, enforcement and first responders.

### How is the province determining who should be tested?

- In addition to completing as many tests as possible, we are being purposeful in our testing to:
  - trace the spread of the virus so we can identify steps to limit the spread
  - determine how well our public health measures are working

### How many COVID-19 tests have been completed?

- For testing data, visit <https://covid19stats.alberta.ca>.

### Part of the Relaunch Strategy involves turning around as many as 20,000 COVID-19 tests a day. How does the province plan to achieve this?

- Testing is critical to protecting Albertans from the spread of COVID-19 and getting Alberta back to business.

- By June, the maximum daily capacity for COVID-19 testing in Alberta will increase to 16,000. This will happen gradually as the new technology is brought online and integrated into the province’s testing systems.
  - The new laboratory equipment will enable two kinds of COVID-19 testing. These two types of tests both detect the virus by amplifying its genetic code. The first, called polymerase-chain reaction – or PCR – is what all of our testing currently uses in Alberta.
  - The new testing method is called Loop-mediated isothermal amplification or LAMP.
- Alberta Precision Laboratories is also bolstering testing capacity in Alberta by securing additional testing supplies, like swabs and reagents.
- Labs are working to increase the amount of time testing is undertaken. Currently testing equipment runs about 20 hours a day. Efforts are underway to expand that to 24/7. Additional laboratory staff are also being trained to help work these extended shifts.

### Where is the testing being done?

- Testing is happening throughout the province.
- All swabs are sent to labs in Edmonton and Calgary for analysis.

### What kind of swabs are used for testing?

- COVID testing in Alberta has used both throat and NP (nasal pharyngeal) swabs. During the height of the pandemic, there was a global shortage of NP swabs, which are the gold standard for testing for respiratory viruses. Now that global supply is stabilizing, AHS is returning to using the NP swabs more broadly.
- If needed, testing will continue to utilize different types of swabs as required, to ensure inventory remains stable.

### What can I expect during testing?

- When you go to the testing centre, you will receive a throat swab; nasal swabs are no longer the preferred method.
- If you are recommended to be tested for COVID-19, you are legally required to self-isolate. If you do not get tested – you must isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms and until symptoms have resolved (whichever is latest).
- While you are awaiting your results you are required to remain in self-isolation, at home. While at home, please also continue to follow good respiratory etiquette, and good hand hygiene practices.
- Visit [Advice for People Tested for COVID-19 \(ahs.ca/results\)](https://ahs.ca/results) for further information regarding next steps.

### If someone makes an appointment and then can’t attend because their schedule changes, what should they do?

- People can reschedule testing appointments 24 hours before their appointment.
- When they register online, they are given a confirmation code and a link to manage their appointment. They cannot reschedule with Health Link 811, it has to be done online with the code and link.
-

## What are the current wait times for testing appointments and testing results?

- Wait times to book an appointment range from 1-3 days depending on the zone (geographic location). Tests are prioritized for certain groups, including people with symptoms and higher risk groups.
- From swab collection to test result takes less than two days.
  - It takes about one day for the lab to receive the swab.
  - At the lab, it takes about 13 hours for the result.
- AHS notifies people within 24 hours of a positive test result.
- As of April 15, all Albertans being tested for COVID-19 can consent to receive their negative COVID-19 test results over the phone through an autodialer system.
- AHS staff are doing their best to book appointments and provide results as quickly as possible, however, the high volume can create delays. Please be assured, you will be contacted directly.
- In the meantime, please follow [isolation](#) guidelines to reduce the risk of transmission.

## Why are you asking people to complete an online self-assessment? Shouldn't I go to the hospital if I have symptoms?

- People with symptoms who are at risk of COVID-19 (such as travellers returning from outside of Canada) should not visit emergency departments or urgent care centres.
- If you have any symptoms or meet any of the asymptomatic testing criteria, please complete the Alberta Health Services' online assessment tool (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) or call Health Link 811 to be tested for COVID-19. The online assessment tool will help you answer questions about your symptoms and take you through steps to help determine whether they need testing.
- If you are in immediate distress from symptoms such as severe difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911. Let the operator know you are experiencing severe symptoms associated with COVID-19.

## Can I call Health Link to get my test results?

- Health Link does not have access to test results. AHS will call you directly.

## What happens if someone tests positive?

- People who test positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days.
- AHS will immediately conduct a risk assessment of anyone who may have been in close contact. Close contacts are required to isolate.
- Anyone not contacted is not at risk and does not need to take any additional measures.
- Albertans are encouraged to download the [ABTraceTogether](#) mobile contact tracing app and use it when in public.

## Is Alberta doing antibody testing?

- Serology testing is used to detect the presence of antibodies in a person's blood, indicating that a person has been exposed to the COVID-19 virus in the past. This is different from the robust polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing which is the most effective way to test if anyone currently has the virus.
- \$10 million will fund two pediatric studies that will measure COVID-19 antibody prevalence among groups of Calgary and Edmonton children until 2022. A third study will test samples from blood collected for other

purposes across the province, and a fourth will regularly test select Albertans over the age of 45 to help officials better estimate the number of people exposed to COVID-19.

- Visit <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-testing-in-alberta.aspx> for more information.

### **Why is testing provided for all Albertans if they don't have symptoms?**

- Making voluntary testing available makes it easier to detect cases early and control potential outbreaks. Testing data helps inform decisions about moving to the next stage of Alberta's relaunch strategy.
- The following groups will continue to receive priority for testing:
  - any person exhibiting any symptom of COVID-19
  - all close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
  - all workers and/or residents at specific outbreak sites
  - all workers and residents at long-term care and level 4 supportive living facilities
  - all patients admitted to continuing care or transferred between continuing care and hospital settings

### **What will it cost to provide this testing?**

- The cost is estimated at \$1.8 million per population per round of testing.
- This includes up to 53,500 tests.

### **What does the online booking look like? What will my experience be?**

- After a person completes the online self-assessment they will be given an option to book an appointment online if they live within 50 km of a testing assessment centre.
- The individual will be shown where assessment centres are located and testing availability (times and dates).
- Once they select a date and time, they will receive a booking confirmation.
- At the same time, the booking will show up in the schedule at the testing assessment centre.
- At the scheduled appointment time, the individual would go to the testing assessment centre to complete their test.

### **Will the testing centre location be the one closest to my home?**

- The online booking system provides you with the nearest location that has availability within the next 36 hours.
- It may not be the closest location to an individual's home but it would be the closest location with availability.

### **What if I live more than 50km away from a testing assessment centre?**

- If you live further than 50 km from a testing assessment centre, the test booking form will be submitted to public health officials for a call back and to schedule an appointment.

### **Can I book my own test through the self-assessment tool?**

- Yes, you can book an appointment for testing through the online self assessment tool.

- If you live further than 50 km from a testing assessment centre, the test booking form will be submitted to public health officials for a call back and to schedule an appointment.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you can also call Health Link 811 for assistance.

### **I'm asymptomatic and don't want to go to an assessment centre. Can I get tested somewhere else?**

- Yes, limited number of community pharmacies will begin to offer testing to Albertans without symptoms and no known exposure to COVID-19.
- Talk to your local pharmacist to see if testing is available.
- Visit [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19) for more information.

## **ISOLATION**

### **Who needs to isolate?**

- You are legally required to isolate if:
  - you arrived in Alberta from travelling outside of Canada. You must isolate for 14 days from your return. If symptoms occur, you must remain in isolation for an additional 10 days from the onset of your symptoms or until you're feeling better, whichever is longer.
  - you have been identified by AHS as a close contact of a person(s) with COVID-19. You must isolate for 14 days from the date of your last exposure to COVID-19, plus an additional 10 days from the onset of any symptoms should they occur, whichever is longer.
  - you have a COVID-19 symptom (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat) that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition. You must isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

### **On which day does the 14-day isolation period begin after having close contact with someone who has the virus?**

- Close contacts of COVID-19 cases must isolate for 14 days from their last exposure to the person who has tested positive.
- If the positive case is from the same household, this means the close contact must be in isolation for 14 days from when the positive case's symptoms subside.
- If you develop symptoms, you must isolate for an additional 10 days from that time or until symptoms subside, or whichever is longer.
- The last day of exposure is considered day 0 for the purposes of counting – each full day after day 0, add one day until you reach your required number of isolation days.

### **What rules do I need to follow if I'm isolating? Can I go outside if I am legally required to isolate but don't have any symptoms and haven't tested positive for COVID-19?**

- Anyone under mandatory isolation must not leave their property, period.
- If you need to isolate, you must follow these steps:
  - Stay home – do not leave your home or attend work, school, social events or any other public gatherings.

- Avoid close contact with people in your household, especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- Don't take public transportation like buses, taxis or ride-sharing. Taking public transportation is legally prohibited.
- Do not go outside for a walk through your neighbourhood or park. This includes children in mandatory isolation.
- You can get fresh air in your backyard, if you have one, but you must remain on private property not accessible by others.
- If you live in an apartment building or highrise, you must stay inside and cannot use the elevators or stairwells to go outside. If your balcony is private and at least 2 metres away from your closest neighbour's, you may go outside on the balcony.
- [For more information, consult the isolation guidelines.](#)

### **If family members or travellers are isolating in a household, do other members of the same household also need to isolate? Specifically, if no one is showing symptoms?**

- Household members of confirmed cases are considered a close contact and must isolate.
- Household members of returning international travellers or Albertans with symptoms are not required to isolate but should monitor for symptoms. If symptoms occur, isolate and complete the online assessment form.

### **How long do people need to isolate if symptoms are present?**

- People need to isolate for **10** days from the onset of symptoms.
- This is the most up-to-date recommendation based on medical evidence.

### **I tested negative for COVID-19, do I need to continue to self-isolate?**

- Yes, if you are a returning traveller or a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- No, if you have no known exposure to the virus. However, it is important you stay at home until your symptoms resolve.

### **What counts as COVID-19 symptoms that require isolation? What if I have a runny nose due to allergies?**

- The legal requirement to isolate applies to any individual with COVID-19 symptoms which are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.
- Worsening stuffy or runny nose can be a symptom of COVID-19. As it can be difficult to determine if symptoms are related to COVID-19 or a pre-existing condition, like seasonal allergies, you are encouraged to err on the side of caution and stay home and/or get tested.
- Learn more about symptoms and how to get [tested](#).

### **If the federal quarantine orders to self-isolate for 14 days when returning from travel outside Canada expire (or are rescinded), do I still need to self-isolate?**

- For the continued health and safety of all Albertans, all individuals entering Alberta from outside of Canada will still be required to self-isolate for 14 days, in accordance with [current public health orders](#), unless they have an exemption of that order.

## Should people at higher risk of complications be pre-emptively isolating?

- If you are at a higher risk of complications from COVID-19, you may wish to limit your time in groups and public spaces. We also encourage all Albertans to stay away from people who are sick, wash hands frequently and take the other steps for prevention outlined on [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://alberta.ca/COVID19).

## ENFORCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS

### What should I do if someone is refusing to follow public health orders (e.g. mandatory isolation)?

- Remind the person that not following public health orders is against the law and puts people at risk. Law enforcement now has full authority to enforce public health orders and issue fines.
- Take proper precautions and, if possible, distance yourself from the individual to limit your risk of exposure if they have symptoms.
- If there are supports that person needs in order to isolate, consider what options your community may have to provide those supports and encourage the person to reach out to those services.
- If necessary, submit a complaint [online](#). If you cannot submit a complaint online, you can also call 1-833-415-9179 and leave a message when prompted. Please do not submit the same complaint both online and by phone.
- The Alberta government and Alberta Health Services are working with local enforcement agencies to manage complaints.

### What if we see businesses or other organizations not following the public health orders?

- Notify local law enforcement immediately of any businesses or other organizations that are not following public health orders by submitting a complaint online (<https://ephisahs.microsoftcrmportals.com/create-case/>).
- The Alberta government and Alberta Health Services are working with local enforcement agencies to manage complaints.

### Do I have to submit my contact information when submitting a complaint about a violation of a public health order? Will the business/person know I complained?

- When submitting a report, you will need to provide your full name, address and phone number. This information is not shared publicly – it's required in case more information is needed to investigate the report.

### What does enforcement look like? What happens when someone violates these orders?

- Anyone putting their families, neighbours or other Albertans at risk will face consequences.
- Community peace officers, in addition to police, can issue tickets to enforce COVID-19 public health orders.
- Fines for violating an order can be \$1,000 per occurrence.
- Courts can administer fines of up to \$100,000 for a first offence and up to \$500,000 for a subsequent offence for more serious violations.
- These aggressive measures are necessary to keep us all healthy and safe.

## Who may be subject to fines?

- Anyone who violates a public health order may be subject to fines.

## How do people pay the fine for violating public health orders?

- Tickets will be issued for routine offences. These can be paid online through the government's webpage: <https://eservices.alberta.ca/fine-payments.html>.
- More significant fines will apply in certain circumstances and will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

## Who can issue fines for public health order violations?

- Public health inspectors assist in identifying, planning, implementing and evaluating environmental public health activities across Alberta. They enforce sections of the *Public Health Act* and regulations pertaining to environmental public health concerns.
- Community peace officers, in addition to police, can issue tickets to enforce COVID-19 public health orders.

## Is carpooling permitted?

- Yes, carpooling is permitted. All Albertans are encouraged to maintain physical distancing as much as possible. If you carpool, it's recommended to stagger seating and practice good hygiene.
- Anyone feeling unwell must stay home. Preventative hygiene measures should also be followed, including:
  - avoid touching your face,
  - wear a mask,
  - stay as far away from other passengers as possible,
  - sanitize hands when leaving the vehicle, and
  - frequently sanitize commonly touched vehicle surfaces, such as door handles, seatbelt buckles, steering wheel, dashboard etc.
- Guidance on wearing non-medical masks can be found here: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-guidance-for-wearing-non-medical-masks.pdf>.

## TRAVEL

### I just returned from outside of Canada, what am I supposed to do?

- If you recently returned from outside Canada, you must go straight home, then:
  - [isolate](#) for 14 days, even if you're feeling well
  - [monitor for symptoms](#) such as fever, cough, sore throat, or runny nose
  - If symptoms occur, you must remain in isolation for an additional 10 days from the onset of symptoms or until you're feeling better, whichever is longer. Complete an online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required
- Isolation orders are not suggestions or guidelines, they are the law and they must be followed.
- For more information visit <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-travel-advice.aspx>.

## If the federal quarantine orders to self-isolate for 14 days when returning from travel outside Canada expire (or are rescinded), do I still need to self-isolate?

- For the continued health and safety of all Albertans, all individuals entering Alberta from outside of Canada will still be required to self-isolate for 14 days, in accordance with [current public health orders](#), unless they have an exemption of that order.

## I just returned from somewhere within Canada. Am I at risk? What are my next steps?

- If you have recently returned from somewhere in Canada, [check the list of affected flights for updates](#).
  - [isolate](#) for 14 days if you were found to be in an affected seat
  - [monitor for symptoms](#) such as fever, cough, sore throat, or runny nose
  - If symptoms occur, you must remain in isolation for an additional 10 days from the onset of symptoms or until you're feeling better, whichever is longer. Complete an online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.
- Passengers who were on the plane but not in affected seats are not required to isolate but should monitor for symptoms for 14 days.
  - If COVID-19 symptoms occur, you must isolate for 10 days or until you're feeling better, whichever is longer. Complete an online self-assessment (<http://ahs.ca/covid>) to determine next steps and whether testing is required.

## How do I know if someone on my flight is diagnosed with COVID-19 and if I'm at risk?

- COVID-19 is not airborne. It is spread by droplets or touching surfaces and then touching your face, so close contact is required.
- Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats are [posted online](#) by the Government of Canada.
  - All passengers from international flights are legally required to isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
  - Passengers in affected seats from domestic flights are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure. They are legally required to isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.

## Can people continue to their final destination or must they isolate immediately upon arriving back in the country?

- They must isolate when they arrive home. However, if they experience any symptoms before their trip begins, they need to alert airport/travel officials and not take public transport.

## What advice are you providing Albertans who want to travel?

- An official global travel advisory is in effect. Albertans should follow all travel recommendations. Avoid all non-essential travel outside Canada, and all cruise ship travel.
- Responsible travel to second homes, vacation homes, cabins, cottages, hotels and commercial accommodations and campgrounds within Alberta is permitted. Physical distancing and restrictions on gatherings still apply.
- Travel outside the province is not recommended.

## What precautions should people take if they're travelling within Alberta?

- If you travel in Alberta:
  - Take all necessary precautions to protect your health and the health of others.
  - Download and use the [ABTraceTogether mobile contact tracing app](#) while out in public.
  - Check Parks Canada and Alberta Parks for details on restrictions and limited amenities.

## If a consumer has had to cancel a trip or vacation because of the COVID-19 pandemic, what recourse do they have?

- Questions about refunds and credits should be directed to your travel service provider, transportation carrier or the Canadian Transportation Agency.
- If you have travel insurance, read your policy closely and determine if its terms and conditions allow for a cancellation due to an event like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- If you don't have travel insurance and booked through your credit card, contact your credit card company to see if you can cancel that way.

## What if an airline or insurance provider has a cancellation policy but is refusing to honour it?

- Complaints regarding refunds on fares (and airfare only), are a federal matter and should be referred to Transport Canada.
- If a travel provider (or broker) has a refund/cancellation policy (for example, on a website, in brochures, etc.) or clause (in the contract) and refuse to honour that policy/clause, it could represent an unfair practice.
- In that case, you could file a complaint with Service Alberta's Consumer Contact Centre at 1-877-427-4088.
  - If an investigation occurs, it would need to determine if the travel company violated the policies/clauses in place at the time the transaction was entered into.

## What is Alberta doing to make sure travellers entering Alberta from outside Canada aren't spreading COVID-19?

- The provincial government is enhancing public health measures to ensure travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada are aware of and following provincial COVID-19 protocols, including the requirement to isolate. This will help prevent the spread of travel related COVID-19.
- Travellers arriving from outside Canada through the Alberta / U.S. Coutts border crossing, Calgary airport, or Edmonton airport must:
  - pass a provincial check point
  - undergo a temperature check using an infrared camera
  - complete an Alberta isolation questionnaire
- The isolation questionnaire is available at [isolationplan.alberta.ca](https://isolationplan.alberta.ca) and can be completed in advance.
- Provincial officials will follow up with travellers within three days to ensure they are following public health orders and have the information and support they need.
- For more information visit [www.alberta.ca/covid-19-travel-advice.aspx](https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-travel-advice.aspx).

## Do public health measures apply to everyone or only to Alberta citizens?

- All travellers entering Alberta from outside Canada are subject to public health requirements. This applies to Alberta citizens and visitors.

## What can travellers arriving from international destinations expect when they land at the Calgary or Edmonton airport?

- When travellers arrive in Canada, they will first need to pass through Canada Border Services. As per the federal *Quarantine Act*, they must provide information about their isolation plans.
- People will also need to stop at the provincial checkpoint. They will need to complete a separate Alberta isolation questionnaire and provide it to provincial officials. They will also undergo a touch-free temperature check using an infrared camera.
- If required, officials will support travellers in meeting isolation requirements, such as helping to arrange appropriate transportation.
- Within three days, travellers will receive a follow-up call from provincial officials to confirm they are following public health orders and have the support they need.

## What if a traveller first stopped in Vancouver or Toronto and then switched to a domestic flight. Do they still need to pass through the provincial checkpoint?

- At this time, the provincial checkpoint is established in the international arrival area of the Calgary and Edmonton airports. Travellers who go through customs at these airports will need to stop.
- All travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada, regardless of their point of entry, will receive a follow-up call from provincial officials to confirm they are following public health orders and have the support they need.

## What constitutes an isolation plan? What happens when plans aren't sufficient?

- Travellers arriving at the Edmonton and Calgary airports from international destinations must complete an Alberta isolation questionnaire, which details their isolation plan:
  - where they will stay for the 14 day isolation period;
  - how they will travel to their isolation location;
  - their plans for getting food, medications and other necessities; and
  - if there is an at-risk person residing in the place they plan to isolate.
- The isolation questionnaire is available at [isolationplan.alberta.ca](https://isolationplan.alberta.ca) and can be completed in advance.
- If people arrive without a proper plan, provincial official will work with the traveller to strengthen their plan. If a proper isolation plan cannot be achieved, provincial officials may be able to help by arranging for transportation or accommodation.

## Can people complete and submit an Alberta isolation questionnaire prior to arriving?

- The isolation questionnaire is available at [isolationplan.alberta.ca](https://isolationplan.alberta.ca) and can be completed in advance.
- Paper copies are also available at the provincial checkpoint, if needed.

### **What happens if a traveller entering Alberta from outside Canada refuses to complete an Alberta isolation questionnaire or submit to a temperature check using the infrared camera?**

- Provincial officials will work closely with travellers to obtain the relevant isolation information. This could include verbally confirming a traveller's isolation plan. Provincial officials will also provide information about how to isolate safely.

### **What about travellers who don't have private transportation from the airport? Can they use public transportation, ride-sharing services or get a ride from a friend?**

- Travellers are encouraged to make sure they have the appropriate supports in place prior to arriving in Alberta.
- Travellers MUST not take public transportation like a bus or shuttle.
- Travellers may use taxi or ride-share services provided they have been assessed by the program, tell the driver they are under quarantine, follow public health measures (wear a mask), and the driver also understands and follows appropriate guidelines for transporting quarantined people.
- These guidelines should be followed if individuals are receiving a ride home from a friend or family member in a private vehicle.
- A guidance document for taxis and ride share companies is online at <https://www.alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx>
- Anyone returning from international travel must go straight from the airport to their isolation location and cannot stop in any public location.

### **What does it look like to be quarantined at the airport?**

- If a traveller arriving in Alberta from outside Canada requires support, they will be temporarily quarantined at the airport while proper arrangements are made.
- There is a secure space set aside at both airports for quarantine purposes. The only individuals to have access to this space are public health staff and the individual under quarantine.
- While in the secure quarantine space, the individual will be supported to arrange the necessary requirements to isolate safely.

### **Do travellers arriving at the airport from outside Canada need to wear a mask?**

- According to the Government of Canada, all air passengers must have a non-medical mask or face covering to cover their nose and mouth during travel. Masks or face coverings must be used:
  - At airport screening checkpoints where people cannot follow physical distancing
  - When travellers cannot physically distance from others
  - When directed to by airline officials, a public health official or to comply with a public health order
  - When travelling to an isolation location.

### **Do these new measures also apply to people travelling across the Alberta/U.S. border via vehicle?**

- People travelling across the Alberta/U.S. border by vehicle will need to follow similar measures.
- Commercial carriers will not have to stop.

## Why are you planning to implement this at only one Alberta/U.S. border crossing?

- This border crossing is the busiest in the province, with the majority of vehicle traffic crossing at this location.

## What sort of follow-up will travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada receive?

- Within three days, travellers will receive a follow-up call from provincial officials to confirm they are following public health orders and have the support they need.

## How can travellers discern between legitimate follow-up calls and potential fraud?

- Provincial officials will not be asking for personal information, beyond confirming the names of travellers.
- Do not provide personal or confidential information, such as your social insurance number, to anyone calling who claims to be from the provincial government. This is a fraudulent call.
- If a traveller is unsure a call is legitimate, they are encouraged to contact 310 to confirm the provincial government is trying to reach them.

## Does the provincial government have the authority to collect this data from travellers?

- The information was collected under Order 05-2020, under the authority Sections 18 and 29 Public Health Act and Sections 20(b) and 27(1)(f) of the Health Information Act (HIA).
- The provincial government also has access to the information travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada provided to the federal government under the *Quarantine Act*.
- The confidentiality of this health information and a person's privacy are protected by the provisions of the *Health Information Act* and the *Public Health Act*. Questions about the collection and use of health information can be directed to Alberta Health's HIA Help Desk: 780-427-8089 / HiaHelpDesk@gov.ab.ca.

## What kind of travel is allowed during relaunch?

- Non-essential travel outside the province is still not recommended. This recommendation will not be lifted until stage 3.
- People can travel responsibly to summer homes, cabins and cottages within Alberta.
- If you do choose to travel, we recommend:
  - packing your own food and stopping for gas only if necessary
  - taking all necessary precautions to protect your health and the health of those around you
  - checking with the local municipality to find out if local restrictions differ from those where you live

## MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

### Should I wear a mask when I leave the house?

- Albertans are encouraged to wear non-medical masks when out in public places where keeping a distance of two metres is difficult.
- Learn more about wearing masks on [Alberta's prevent the spread webpage](#).
- You can also refer to [Guidance for Wearing of Non-Medical Face Masks for the General Public](#) for more information on how and when to wear a mask.

## Will wearing a non-medical mask protect me?

- There is no proof wearing a non-medical mask, such as a homemade cloth mask, will protect the person wearing it. However, it may be helpful in protecting others around you.
- Face coverings are another way to prevent respiratory droplets from contaminating other people and surfaces, and should only be used in combination with other prevention steps. Remember to always:
  - practice [physical distancing](#)
  - practice good hygiene: wash hands often for at least 20 seconds, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching your face
  - monitor for symptoms: such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat
  - self-isolate for the legally required 10 days if you have any symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or medical condition
  - take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) to access testing

## How do I properly use a non-medical mask?

- Learn more about wearing masks on [Alberta's prevent the spread webpage](#), including videos from Dr. Hinshaw on how to [choose the right non-medical mask](#) and [how to use a non-medical mask](#).
- If you choose to use a non-medical face mask, you should:
  - follow the [guidance for wearing non-medical face masks](#)
  - wash your hands immediately before putting it on, before taking it off, and immediately after taking it off
  - make sure it fits well (non-gaping)
  - not share it with others
- Face masks can become contaminated on the outside or when touched by your hands. When wearing a mask:
  - avoid touching your face/mask
  - continue practicing good hand hygiene
  - change a cloth mask as soon as it gets damp or soiled
    - put it directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine and then disposed of
    - cloth masks can be laundered with other items using a hot cycle, and then dried thoroughly
  - masks that cannot be washed should be discarded and replaced as soon as they get damp, soiled or crumpled
    - dispose of masks properly in a lined garbage bin
    - don't leave discarded masks in shopping carts, on the ground, etc.

## Should I wear gloves?

- Wearing gloves isn't necessary for the public. If you do choose to wear gloves, remember:

- to wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before you put on gloves and immediately after taking them off
- not to touch your face with your gloves
- not to touch your mask with your gloves (if you wear one)
- not to touch any personal items (e.g. cell phone, bag, credit card) that you might touch again with bare hands
- to change gloves if you touch your face – eyes, nose or mouth – or cover a cough or sneeze with your hands while wearing gloves
- not to try to wash gloves or use hand sanitizer with gloves on
- that gloves must be changed when they become soiled or torn
- to discard gloves in a lined garbage bin after taking them off and wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

### Will the provincial government be providing masks to all Albertans?

- Beginning July 13, another 20 million free, non-medical masks will be distributed through A&W, McDonald's and Tim Hortons locations (at the counter or drive-thru) and other partners, including:
  - Municipalities without easy access to a restaurant partner location
  - First Nations and Metis Settlements
  - Places of worship
  - Transit services provincewide, including in Calgary and Edmonton
  - 7-Eleven Canada is providing no-cost shipping of masks from the government's warehouses to transit system operators across the province
  - Seniors organizations and independent living facilities
  - Long-term care and supportive living facilities
  - Women's shelters, homeless shelters and street outreach programs
  - Addiction treatment centres
  - Other organizations that have highlighted a need for masks
- Albertans who cannot access masks through a restaurant partner, municipal or community provider can call 211 for assistance.
- In June, 20 million masks were distributed through restaurant partners, municipalities, long-term care facilities, First Nations and Metis Settlements, and other organizations.
- More details are available at [alberta.ca/masks](https://alberta.ca/masks).

### Can businesses legally require customers and/or staff to wear masks and deny service if people refuse?

- While there are no public health orders mandating the use of masks, businesses are responsible for determining appropriate measures to protect the health of staff and patrons.
- This may include requirements for staff and patrons to wear masks if a business owner determines this step is necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

## Can stores require people to bring their own masks or do they need to supply one if they require them to be worn?

- There is no current public health order mandating that stores supply masks for customers.

## What are N95 masks? Should the public wear them?

- N95 masks are special protective masks that protect the wearer from airborne particles. These masks are recommended for health-care workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings such as acute care, primary care, long-term care, ambulatory clinics and community care, homecare and other locations in the community where health care is provided.
  - Alberta Health has [specific guidelines](#) for personal protective equipment for these roles.
- N95 masks are not recommended for the general public, who will typically not find themselves in these settings.

## What guidance is available to support businesses on how to use and procure masks and other PPE?

- It's important businesses take measures 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 acrylic plastic barriers (e.g. Plexiglas), signage and floor markings, and traffic flow controls to limit the number of people in a space
  - use personal protective equipment (PPE) and follow [guidance to wear masks properly](#)
- Business owners can purchase PPE through the following procurement websites:
  - [Rapid Response Platform Canada](#)
  - [ATB Nexus](#)
- More guidance and information for businesses is available at [alberta.ca/biz-connect](https://alberta.ca/biz-connect)

## Why are we sending PPE to other provinces? Do we have enough for our front-line staff?

- Many jurisdictions are trying to secure additional health equipment to make up for expected shortfalls. Alberta has prepared adequately with medical equipment and medical/surgical supplies located across the province, allowing for a quick and effective provincial response.
- Alberta's health experts are confident in our modelling data and the expected need for PPEs and ventilators in our province. We are currently in a position to help ensure other Canadian health systems are equipped for the challenges ahead.
- Alberta Health Services has entered into agreements with several vendors to purchase more PPE to prepare for ongoing needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Does the province have enough PPE? When will you run out?

- Alberta is well prepared and has an adequate supply of medical equipment available.
- Alberta has equipment and medical/surgical supplies pre-positioned across the province, allowing for a quick and effective provincial response.
- AHS placed and received an order for additional PPE and other equipment in January, when the virus outbreak was largely limited to China and a select number of other countries.
- The federal government has also committed to help support additional supplies across the country.

- We are working with AHS to ensure our existing supplies are shared with those who need them, while also being used as effectively as possible.

### How do we obtain personal protective equipment from the Government?

- Requests for personal protective equipment and hand sanitizer can be made by completing the web form: <https://www.alberta.ca/ppe-request>  
Medical experts will triage and assess the requests and determine actual need based on medical guidelines.
  - The regular channel for requests during an emergency should be followed, which is typically made by the local authority's Emergency Social Services Director, or its Director of Emergency Management.
  - If you are a member of the NGO network, please follow your current process for identifying needs and services you have available to assist.
  - Municipalities and others receiving the PPE are asked to keep good records of the equipment provided to them

### Do you have priorities for PPE distribution?

- Healthcare workers are our priority, and we are ensuring they get the PPE needed so they can continue to do their good work.
- Local authorities or employers of people that support at-risk populations, child-care operators, emergency workers and critical infrastructure operators who placed orders are receiving PPE.

### I didn't get the amounts I asked for, are there shortages?

- Organizations may not receive exactly what they have asked for, but they will receive what experts have deemed necessary for them to do their work safely.
- This equipment includes hand sanitizer, wipes, disinfectants, masks, gloves and safety eyewear.
- Medical experts review requests to ensure that what is being asked for aligns with best practices – for example, only healthcare workers need N95 masks.

### Do clinic staffers gear up in haz mat suits or other measures?

- At this time, COVID-19 appears to be spread by droplets and contact, so standard contact and droplet precautions are taken.
- This includes the [appropriate personal protective equipment](#) such as gloves, a long-sleeved gown, surgical mask and eye protection.
- These are routine practices that are also used when treating influenza or any other severe respiratory illness.

## FOOD HANDLING

### Do people need to take steps to disinfect purchased goods (particularly stuff like fruit and vegetables) above and beyond what they'd normally do?

- The virus is primarily transmitted through person-to-person spread by larger droplets, like from a cough or sneeze.

- It can also be passed by touching contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- While the virus can live under ideal circumstances (such as on stainless steel) for several days, it is generally only live on surfaces like paper or plastic for a few hours.
- There is no evidence of the virus being spread by packaging mail, grocery goods or other items.
- The best steps to prevent transmission is to wash your hands, regularly clean surfaces and follow the other recommended steps on [alberta.ca/COVID19](https://www.alberta.ca/COVID19).

### Are there precautions we should take when having take-out food or having it delivered in?

- You should take the food out of the packaging it came in, transfer it to a plate and throw the packaging away. Then wash your hands for 20 seconds before eating the food.

### What should grocery store operators do to help reduce the spread?

- A guidance document is available [online](#) with details on how you can help reduce the spread.

## RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS

### What is a gathering?

- A gathering is any event or assembly that brings together people in a single room or space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, place of worship, large conference room, meeting hall, cafeteria, theatre, or any other confined indoor or outdoor space.

### What are the most current gathering restrictions?

- Up to 200 people can attend audience-type community outdoor events, such as festivals, fireworks displays, rodeos and sporting events, and outdoor performances. All public health measures, including physical distancing, remain in place. Seated outdoor events require the necessary space between families and cohorts.
- A 100-person limit is in place for other outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events.
- A 50-person maximum applied to indoor social gatherings, including wedding and funeral receptions and birthday parties.
- No cap on the number of people (with public health measures in place):
  - worship gatherings
  - restaurant, cafes, lounges and bars
  - casinos
  - bingo halls
- More flexibility for 'cohort' groups – small groups of people whose members do not always keep 2 metres apart:
  - a household can increase its close interactions with other households to a maximum of 15 people
  - performers can have a cohort of up to 50 people (cast members or performers)
  - sports teams can play in region-only cohorts of up to 50 players (mini leagues)
  - people could be part of a sports/performing and household cohort.

- All gatherings under these limits must occur in a space that allows for [mandated physical distancing](#) of at least 2 metres from each other.
- Further details on gathering restrictions are available [online](#).

### Can I continue going to my place of worship?

- There is no cap on the number of people allowed at worship gatherings (with public health measures in place).
- More information, including ways to mitigate risk, can be found at [alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx](http://alberta.ca/guidance-documents.aspx).

### How can people stay safe at permitted gatherings?

- Make sure the space allows for the mandated 2 metres of physical distancing. Avoid high-risk activities that promote infection. Don't shake hands, hug, or share food or utensils.
- To reduce the risk at permitted gatherings:
  - Cancel, postpone, reschedule or explore virtual attendance, especially for people at greater risk, such as people age 60 years or older, and those with chronic medical conditions.
  - Contact Alberta Health Services Environmental Public Health before starting volunteer initiatives that involve preparing food or collecting donations. These types of activities can spread COVID-19.
  - Ensure people who have any symptoms stay home, even if they appear mild or resemble a cold
  - Reduce the number of participants or change the venue to allow for physical distancing.
  - Stagger the time of arrivals and departures from gatherings.
  - Increase access to handwashing stations or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Increase the frequency of cleaning of surfaces that are touched often.
  - Shared surfaces such as doorknobs, faucets, and washrooms may require intermittent cleaning during the gathering.
  - Promote personal protective practices (coughing and sneezing etiquette, hand hygiene).

### Singing is one of the activities your list of activities recommends against. Does this mean I can't sing in my choir?

- Singing is a high-risk activity because infected people can transmit the virus through their saliva or respiratory droplets.
- Congregational singing is not allowed. Consider a soloist or instrumental music instead.
- Gatherings that include singing should take the following precautions:
  - keep singers completely separate from the audience and each other by live streaming individuals singing separately
  - limit the number of people singing in the same place to the fewest possible
  - have people sing facing away from others or otherwise creating separation using an acrylic barrier such as Plexiglas
- There is no evidence to determine exactly what a safe distance would be between singers and others, but greater distances can reduce risk.

### What kind of gatherings are exempt?

- You can learn more about exemptions on gathering restrictions [online](#).

## OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

### What should I think about when doing outdoor activities?

- You are encouraged to enjoy outdoor activities, as long as you follow all public health orders to protect yourself and others from the spread of COVID-19.
  - Outdoor gatherings of up to 100 people are permitted.
  - Up to 200 people can attend audience-type community outdoor events, such as festivals, fireworks displays, rodeos and sporting events, and outdoor performances.
  - Stay home and away from others if exhibiting symptoms
  - If participating in activities with people from outside your household or cohort family
    - maintain a physical distance of 2 metres at all times
    - refrain from sharing equipment

### What sort of outdoor activities are okay?

- Albertans are permitted to participate in a number of activities – as long as they do so with common sense and follow all public health orders and guidelines.
- Examples of permitted activities include:
  - going for walks, bike rides or flying kites
  - gardening in community settings
  - visiting parks (check provincial or national parks for restrictions before visiting)
  - activities in public or private facilities that municipalities or operators have reopened:
    - lakes, parks and trails
    - open fields like soccer pitches or ball diamonds
    - sports courts
    - playgrounds
  - activities at outdoor facilities that have been allowed to reopen:
    - golf courses – guidance documents for operators are available [online](#)
    - outdoor gun ranges
- Sports teams can play in region-only cohorts of up to 50 players (mini leagues).
- For more information, view [guidance on outdoor activities](#).
- Guidance documents for sports activities, as well as outdoor fitness classes, are now available [online](#).
- Up to 200 people can attend audience-type community outdoor events, such as festivals, fireworks displays, rodeos and sporting events, and outdoor performances. All public health measures, including physical distancing, remain in place. Seated outdoor events require the necessary space between families and cohorts.
- A 100-person limit is in place for other outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events.

### Can I have a backyard BBQ with friends?

- There is a 100 person maximum for outdoor events like backyard gatherings.
- However, communal meals, such as barbecues, picnics or drinks with friends or neighbours, carry a higher risk of spreading COVID-19 due to multiple people touching the same objects or surfaces.

## What outdoor activities are not allowed under public health orders?

- Any event that exceeds the gathering restrictions or does not follow all public health orders and guidelines.
- Major festivals and concerts, large conferences, trade shows and events.
- Guidance documents for sports activities are now available [online](#)

## Can I hold a garage sale?

- Garage sales are permitted if the municipality allows. Please check with your local municipality as additional rules may be in place.

## COHORT FAMILIES

### What is a cohort family?

- Members of a household can partner with other households to create a cohort family, to a maximum of 15 people.
- This is an agreement to maintain physical distancing from everyone else.
- Members of a cohort family can support each other, such as with childcare or companionship.
- Learn more about cohort families on [Alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread](https://alberta.ca/prevent-the-spread).

### What rules must be followed to be part of cohort family?

- All members in a cohort must:
  - be completely committed to practice physical distancing from people outside the cohort family
  - be healthy and not show any COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat)
  - not have underlying medical conditions
  - not be at high risk (for example, seniors)
  - have not travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days

### How many people can form a cohort?

- A household can increase its close interactions with other households to a maximum of 15 people.
- All people in a cohort must be committed to practice physical distancing from everyone outside the cohort, be healthy, not have any underlying medical conditions, not be part of a high-risk population (e.g. seniors) and not have travelled outside of Canada within 14 days.

### Are cohorts only for people with children?

- You do not need to have children to be part of a cohort.

### I live with roommates. Does my cohort need to include them?

- All members of a household should belong to the same cohort. You and your roommate should not have different cohort families.

## BLOOD DONATIONS

### Can people still donate blood during the pandemic?

- The need for blood donors remains strong. It is safe to donate blood during COVID-19 and donations can help save lives.
- Blood donor centres across Canada are places of wellness within Canada's health system.
- Blood donation can help address the feeling of helplessness people have in the face of COVID-19; gaining a sense of control during this situation can help contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing.
- To learn more, visit Canadian Blood Services website at: [blood.ca](http://blood.ca)

## ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS

### How was the list of essential versus non-essential services determined?

- Essential services are public services that if interrupted would endanger the life, personal safety or health of the public. These services are also necessary to maintain and administer the rule of law and public security.
- A list of workplaces considered to be essential during the COVID-19 pandemic is available [online](#).

### Should police, firefighters, nurses, doctors, paramedics, etc. be going to work if they feel ill?

- All Albertans are legally required under public health order to isolate for 10 days if they have any symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.

### What should essential service workers do when returning from travel?

- For essential service workers who are feeling well but returned from travel in the last 14 days, some groups have been granted exemptions as long as they continue to feel well, with extra mitigating measures in place to prevent the possibility of spread should they start to feel ill at work.
- Exemptions are assessed on a case-by-case basis for specific groups of essential service workers.

### What are you doing to address the outbreak situations at work camps? Will they result in the spread to hundreds of people like at Cargill?

- We continue to closely monitor the situation at workcamps that have had outbreaks to ensure appropriate control measures are being implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- All workplaces are expected to develop and implement policies and procedures to address COVID-19.
- General guidance for business owners is available online (<https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-workplace-guidance-for-business-owners.pdf>), and specific guidance is available for managers and operators of industrial work camps: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-work-camps-fact-sheet.pdf>.

### What is being done to keep food processing facilities safe?

- It's important to remember COVID-19 is not a food-borne pathogen.
- This is not to dismiss the importance of all food processing facilities following appropriate food handling precautions in accordance with Food Regulations and other applicable provincial and federal legislation.

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) are both visiting each outbreak site regularly to ensure control measures are implemented, and to provide advice/support.
- We are responding rapidly to new reports of outbreaks to mitigate their impact and spread.
- All meat processing facilities in Alberta with outbreaks underway have implemented safety controls that meet requirements identified by AHS, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, OHS legislation and orders from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. These controls are tailored in the facilities to address the needs of the situation and operation. For example, controls in place include:
  - staff temperature check and symptom checks before entering the facility
  - face masks and other personal protective equipment provided to employees and worn at all times
  - enhanced cleaning and sanitizing practices
  - staggered breaks and shift flexibility to prevent gatherings
  - installing additional sinks where needed to ensure that handwashing can be done while distancing is maintained
  - increasing distance between employees to ensure 2 metres of separation.
- Lessons learned at the Cargill and JBS outbreaks are being used in rapid responses to other meat processing outbreaks in the province.
- There have been four other meat processing plants where cases have been identified, and case counts in all four have been kept low by prompt implementation of all the measures named above plus widespread and early testing, including asymptomatic staff.
- Testing is being offered to all workers in outbreaks, including those without symptoms and broader asymptomatic testing at the community level has also been offered in Brooks and High River
- To help prevent the spread in the communities themselves, we have established assessment centres for staff and community members in both Brooks and High River.

## EXPECTANT PARENTS

### Are people who are pregnant more likely to catch COVID-19 or at risk of more serious health complications?

- There is currently no evidence to suggest that being pregnant increases your risk of getting COVID-19.
- People who are pregnant are currently considered to have the same risk of getting COVID-19 as other adults.
- Evidence is unclear whether the COVID-19 virus is transmitted to your baby during pregnancy or delivery. There is currently no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted to your baby through breastmilk.
- There is currently no evidence to suggest that a pregnant person is at a greater risk for more serious complications related to COVID-19. However, as with any significant maternal illness, there is always an increased risk of preterm or stillbirth. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions about COVID-19 symptoms or if you were tested for COVID-19 or have test results.

### Where can I find more information about being pregnant, giving birth and caring for my new baby during the pandemic?

- Please view the AHS [COVID-19 and Pregnancy Guide](#).

- Direct your question to your health-care provider or call Health Link (811). Health Link provides health advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### What maternity services will be available in Calgary and High River?

- As of June 3, 2020, expectant mothers and families can access all in-hospital labour and delivery, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), postpartum and newborn care at South Health Campus in southeast Calgary.
- In-hospital maternal/newborn services at High River Hospital will also be available on that day.

### If COVID-19 cases go up in the Calgary area, will maternity services still be available as planned?

- For maternity services to become available throughout the region, COVID-19 cases will need to be manageable in the next few weeks.

## CONTINUING CARE

### Can I visit my loved one in continuing care?

- We are doing everything we can to protect the health of those in congregate care settings.
- Information on current visitation protocols is available [here](#).
- Indoor visits:
  - Visitors may not enter any continuing care facility (long-term care or licensed supportive living), except for visits from a designated essential visitor when the resident's quality of life or care needs cannot be met without the designated essential visitor's assistance
    - One designated visitor can be named per resident. They can be a family member, friend or companion, but must be over the age of 18. A replacement can be named, if required.
  - Up to two visitors may attend to a resident in a continuing care centre who is at the end of their life. This is defined as up to two weeks before death, but it is understood that estimates are imprecise.
    - Visitors must be verified and undergo a health screening prior to entering the facility. They are also required to wear a mask during their visit and maintain physical distancing.
- Outdoor visits:
  - Residents who are not in isolation may visit outdoors with a designated essential visitor and one other person. However, physical distancing must be practiced and all visitors must wear a mask or some other form of face covering.
  - Arrangements should be made prior to visiting by contacting the facility operator directly.
- Families and friends of residents are encouraged think of how they can support and encourage their loved ones while keeping them safe.
- More information is available online at <https://www.alberta.ca/protecting-residents-at-congregate-care-facilities.aspx>

### Can I take my loved one out of a continuing care facility and bring them home if they have tested negative for COVID-19?

- Decisions to relocate a resident from a facility must be made in conjunction with their care team and physician.

- Families will need to be prepared to provide care for the resident (which may include additional home supports) and be responsible for their care until the facility can safely re-admit them.
- We encourage you to speak with your loved one's care team and physician to make an informed decision.

### What is being done to keep continuing care residents safe?

- As continuing care residents are most at risk of experiencing serious effects from COVID-19, more stringent measures are being taken to protect residents and staff.
- To further protect residents and staff from exposure to COVID-19 through asymptomatic individuals, continuing care workers are required to wear masks at all times when providing direct patient care or working in patient care areas.
- To reduce the potential spread between locations, workers in long-term care and supportive living sites are only allowed to work at one facility.
- Updated operational and outbreak standards have been implemented to help ensure seniors and other at-risk individuals living and working in these facilities are kept as safe as possible.
- Visit [Protecting residents at congregate care facilities](#) for more information.
- A detailed question and answer document has been posted online to provide more information for operators and staff of licensed supportive living and long-term care facilities. It can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/protecting-residents-at-congregate-care-facilities.aspx>

## NON-COVID-19 HEALTHCARE

### There are reports of people stockpiling medication. What is the government doing in response?

- As of June 15, pharmacists can dispense up to 100 days of prescriptions if the drug supply is stable.
- While supply levels appear to be returning to normal, some drugs are still in limited supply. Pharmacists should use their professional judgment and dispense a 30-day supply when necessary for specific drugs that continue to have shortages or supply chain issues.

### Is Alberta Health Services (AHS) cancelling Home Care?

- AHS is not cancelling Home Care. Home Care is a very important service for many Albertans, particularly during this challenging time.
- Just as with other areas of the healthcare system, we are experiencing some staffing challenges due to people self-isolating, or staying home to look after their children. That's understandable. This challenge will be ongoing, not just in home care, but in many other areas.
- Home Care staff are working closely with each client to discuss potential impacts and to determine what essential services still need to be provided. This may include establishing back-up plans, or involving a family member in supporting some of a client's care needs.
- All AHS Home Care staff have appropriate PPE and follow proper donning and doffing procedures and hand washing techniques to protect themselves and their clients.
- If a client is symptomatic and the backup plan is not feasible to implement, and/or care services are considered essential, Home Care staff will continue to provide care using appropriate PPE and following proper donning and doffing protocols.

## What is the government doing as a result of COVID-19 to support the mental health and addiction recovery of Albertans?

- More than \$53 million has been provided to implement a comprehensive mental health and addiction COVID-19 response plan which includes:
  - expanding mental health support and referral lines including the Alberta Health Services (AHS) Addiction and Mental Health Helplines, 211, Crisis Text Line Alberta and Kids Help Phone to increase capacity and add new supports
  - investing in online resources and platforms where Albertans can communicate with peers who are dealing with the same issues and get support 24/7 from AHS addiction and mental health clinicians when they need it.
  - implementing a new online platform that will provide mental health screening, self-help modules and support from counsellors when it is needed
  - launching a \$25-million grant program for community groups to enhance community mental health and addiction recovery for the public, including Indigenous communities, seniors, families and people experiencing social barriers, who are negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
  - expanding AHS family violence services
  - increasing addiction and mental health services in primary care networks

## I don't have COVID-19 symptoms and I need medical assistance for another reason, but I can't get treatment (medicentres are closed/doctors are turning patients away/I can't get through to Health Link). What do I do?

- We understand the strain that COVID-19 is causing on many Albertans. If your family physician or other health-care provider is unable or unwilling to receive you, we recommend you contact another health-care provider to find out if they are available.
  - To find a family doctor near you who is accepting new patients, Primary Care Networks and the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta offer online tools. Visit <https://albertafindadoctor.ca/> and <https://search.cpsa.ca/physiciansearch>

## Can I travel to the US for a pre-scheduled medical treatment?

- If you have applied to receive out-of-country health services through the Out-of-Country Health Services Committee, you should first contact the Alberta physician or dentist who submitted the application for you to determine next steps.

## Are dental and other regulated health services available again?

- Dental and other regulated health-care workers such as physiotherapists, speech language pathologists, respiratory therapists, audiologists, social workers, occupational therapists, dieticians and more can resume services as long as they follow approved guidelines set by their professional colleges.

## COMMUNICATING WITH ALBERTANS

### What is government doing to ensure all pandemic-related communications released by provincial and health authorities are fully accessible and in plain language?

- All communications, including all COVID-19 information at the [alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19) website, is written in simple, easy to understand language. We want all Albertans to understand the spread of the virus and know how to stay healthy.

### How are you communicating with Albertans who are hearing impaired?

- The province contracts a sign-language interpreter at each availability with the Premier and Chief Medical Officer of Health to help communicate to people who are hard of hearing.

### What about people who don't speak English?

- Information sheets on how to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are available in a number of languages, including French, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi and Urdu.

### Do you have communication materials for people who have developmental disabilities?

- An information sheet on COVID for folks with developmental disabilities is available on the [alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19) website under 'Resources'.

## BUSINESSES, SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

### What businesses, services and activities are currently permitted?

- The following businesses and services are permitted to reopen and resume operations with 2 metre physical distancing requirements and other public health guidelines in place:
  - retail businesses, such as clothing, furniture and bookstores, and all vendors at farmers markets
  - museums and art galleries
  - daycares and out-of-school care, with limits on occupancy
  - hairstyling and barber shops
  - cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars permitted to reopen for table service only at 50 per cent capacity – a guidance document for operators of restaurants, cafés and pubs is available [online](#)
  - day camps, including summer school permitted, with limits on occupancy
  - post-secondary in-person classes, with restrictions
  - places of worship and funeral services, if they follow specific guidance already [online](#)
  - resumption of some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries will continue gradually
  - regulated health professions are permitted to offer services as long as they continue to follow approved guidelines set by their professional colleges
  - K-12 schools, for requested diploma exams and summer school, following guidance
  - libraries
  - more surgeries
  - wellness services such as massage, acupuncture and reflexology

- personal services (esthetics, cosmetics skin and body treatments, manicures, pedicures, waxing, facial treatments, artificial tanning)
- movie theatres and theatres
- community halls
- team sports
- indoor recreation, fitness and sports, including gyms and arenas
- pools for leisure swimming
- VLTs in restaurants and bars
- bingo halls and casinos (but not table games)
- instrumental concerts
- provincial campgrounds at full capacity
- All public health guidance must continue to be followed.

### What is still not permitted?

- The following business, services and activities are still not permitted:
  - regular in-school classes for kindergarten to Grade 12 – classes will resume September 2020
  - vocal concerts (as singing carries a higher risk of transmission)
  - major festivals and concerts, large conferences, trade shows and events (as these are non-seated social events and/or vocal concerts)
  - nightclubs
  - amusement parks
  - hookah lounges (permitted for food and drink only)
  - major sporting events and tournaments

## RE-LAUNCH

### What is Alberta's current stage of relaunch?

- Alberta is in stage 2 of the relaunch strategy. The latest information and details are available online at [alberta.ca/RelaunchStrategy](https://alberta.ca/RelaunchStrategy).

### Why did the government decide to move to stage two of relaunch early? How are we ensuring safety as we move forward with relaunch?

- Strong testing data shows active COVID-19 cases in Alberta are lower than expected. Albertans have continued to act responsibly to limit the spread, and it is safe to progress to the next stage of relaunch.
- Safety remains the top priority throughout all stages of relaunch. As more businesses, sport and recreation services can open and larger gatherings are permitted, public health guidance must continue to be followed.
- The success of stage two will determine when Alberta progresses to stage three. Factors are: active cases, infection rates, health-care system capacity, cases in hospital and intensive care.

## Why hasn't the state of public health emergency been extended?

- As we have entered stage 2 of the provincial relaunch, we now longer need the state of public health emergency to protect Albertans.
- While the state of public health emergency is lapsing, it does not remove or impact the existing orders that the chief medical officer of health has put in place, nor does it impact her ability to issue additional orders as needed in the days ahead.
- All Ministerial Orders amending legislation made under Section 52.1 continue for a period of 60 days, unless terminated sooner.
- We will introduce new legislation in the coming days to further help ensure we have the power to respond appropriately to the pandemic as needed.

## Going forward, how can people find out what is open in their community?

- Public health officials continue to be proactive and monitor confirmed cases in real time. This information affects Alberta's relaunch strategy.
- A new, [interactive web map](#) will help Albertans assess current risk by identifying areas of the province that are open, on watch, or require enhanced measures.

## What important things should Albertans consider/do during relaunch?

- Businesses are doing their utmost to keep their customers and safe, and Albertans can and should confidently support these businesses as the province gradually relaunches the economy.
- Physical distancing requirements of two metres remain in place through all stages of relaunch.
- Hygiene practices will continue to be required of businesses and individuals, along with instructions for Albertans to stay home when exhibiting symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat.
- Continue to protect yourself and others:
  - Practise physical distancing
  - Download and use the ABTraceTogether mobile contact tracing app while out in public
  - Stay home and away from others if you are sick or in isolation
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow
  - Avoid touching your face
  - Isolate for 14 days if you were exposed to COVID-19 or have returned from travel outside Canada. Isolate for at least 10 days if you are experiencing a COVID-19 symptom not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition
  - Consider wearing a non-medical mask when out in public places where keeping a distance of two metres is difficult

## Do businesses that are allowed to re-open have to open? What sort of guidance is being provided to business owners/operators?

- No. It is up to each business operator to determine if they are ready to open and ensure all guidance has been met. Relaunch guidance is available [online](#).

- If an owner determines they need additional time to put appropriate measures in place to protect staff and patrons, we encourage Albertans to be supportive and not critical.
- Businesses allowed to re-open during relaunch will be subject to strict infection prevention and controls, and will be carefully monitored for compliance with public health orders.
- The new [alberta.ca/biz-connect](https://alberta.ca/biz-connect) webpage provides business owners with information on health and safety guidance for general workplaces, as well as sector-specific guidance for those able to open in stage one.
- If you have questions about how relaunch may apply to your business, email: [BizConnect@gov.ab.ca](mailto:BizConnect@gov.ab.ca)

### Can people who are now permitted to return to work refuse to if they feel unsafe?

- Alberta businesses are working hard to keep you safe.
- Businesses allowed to re-open during stage one will be subject to strict infection prevention and controls, and will be carefully monitored for compliance with public health orders.
- Information on the right to refuse unsafe work is available [online](#).

### Should I continue to work from home?

- Remote working is advised where possible.

### Is it possible restrictions will be tightened again?

- While restrictions are gradually eased across the province, an outbreak may mean that they need to be strengthened temporarily in a local area.

## OVERNIGHT SURGERIES

### Why is Alberta Health Services (AHS) resuming non-urgent scheduled surgeries and procedures?

- Albertans are following the public health guidelines successfully. We don't need as many hospital and ICU beds for COVID patients as we thought. That's great for everyone.
- Hospitals across the province started performing day surgeries on May 4, with more than 3,000 day surgeries completed in the first few weeks.
- That success shows it is safe to start performing overnight and short-stay surgeries.

### When will overnight surgeries resume?

- Overnight surgeries have begun to resume. Different parts of the province may start on different days as they firm up staffing, ensure adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), and balance the COVID-19 response.

### How will you decide which surgeries to do?

- Emergency and urgent life-saving surgeries come first, as they have all through the pandemic.
- Decisions on which surgeries proceed are based on clinical need. People who are sickest and who waited the longest will be booked first.
- These decisions are being made at the local level and also are based on the local pandemic response.

### **What surgeries will be first to restart?**

- The largest group of people who have been waiting the longest are those waiting for cataracts surgery. They will be the first to get surgery.
- The second-largest group of people with the longest wait are people waiting for hip and knee arthroplasty (the joint is repaired or replaced). They will be the next group to get surgery.

### **How many people are waiting for surgery?**

- All urgent, emergency and cancer surgeries have been available throughout the pandemic. Since March 1, there have been about 25,000 of these surgeries.
- Since March 18 when non-urgent surgeries were put on hold, between 3,500 and 4,000 surgeries were postponed each week—or between 20,000 to 25,000.
- Before COVID-19 in Alberta, there were about 68,000 patients waiting for surgery. As of May 15, about 77,000 patients were waiting for surgery.
- There is no set date by which everyone will get surgery. The health system is working to get people the care they need as soon as possible—but also making sure urgent surgeries continue and that patients and staff are safe during COVID-19.

### **What happens if the COVID-19 situation gets worse?**

- Alberta's staged relaunch strategy puts safety first. Government will keep monitoring how we're dealing with the pandemic, outbreaks and spaces in hospital for those who need urgent care.
- We have a plan in case the situation evolves and might change what surgeries are available if necessary.

### **How will you make sure hospitals have the supplies they need?**

- Each week, we make sure we have enough supplies, depending on the situation.
- Right now, the health system has enough personal protective equipment (PPE) and doesn't expect a shortage. Since it comes from a few different suppliers, sometimes those who are wearing it need to make sure it fits. All PPE meets approved standards.

### **Where are you getting the staff and physicians to do the surgical work?**

- Some staff were moved temporarily to other areas when surgeries were put on hold. These staff will be moved back, as they won't need as much training.
- Staff who were moved to prepare for more patients in the intensive care unit (ICU) due to COVID-19 will be available if they are needed.

### **When will Albertans be contacted about their surgeries?**

- When it is time for them to receive their surgery, patients will be contacted directly.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AMENDMENT ACT – EMERGENCY POWERS**

### **What specific sections of the *Public Health Act* are being amended?**

- The details are in the bill, but essentially, certain powers that government feels we still need are being put into legislation so they will be available after August 14, 2020.
- The proposed changes will also extend the emergency powers an additional 60 days (until August 14, 2020) now that the state of public health emergency ended on June 15, 2020. These powers were used sparingly during the state of public health emergency, in very specific circumstances.
- The proposed amendments ensure the public health orders issued in response to COVID-19 pandemic and critical to our relaunch efforts remain in effect.

### **What does this mean for the existing public health measures that have been put in place by the Chief Medical Office of Health, Dr. Hinshaw?**

- While the state of public health emergency lapsed on June 15, it did not remove or impact the existing orders that Dr. Hinshaw has put in place. Nor does it impact her ability to issue additional orders as needed in the days ahead.

### **Will Alberta Health Services still be operating the long-term care centres they had to take over during the pandemic?**

- Yes, AHS will continue to exercise its authorities to oversee operations with respect to Manoir du Lac and Millrise Seniors Village.
- Ending the state of public health emergency did not reduce supports available to residents in continuing care, or our commitment to protecting them from COVID-19.

### **Why not just extend the state of public health emergency instead of amending the *Public Health Act*?**

- As Albertans are doing the right thing and acting responsibly, a state of public health emergency is no longer required. Alberta's COVID-19 case numbers remain stable, and our health-care system is able to manage the demand for services.
- Going forward, we still have the power to respond appropriately to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the proposed amendments will help us during the next phases of our overall response.
- We also want to ensure we are transparent with Albertans about when and how we use emergency powers. If something changes in future, another state of public health emergency could be declared if the situation warrants it and in consultation with the CMOH.

### **What happens now?**

- All Ministerial Orders are still in effect and remain in effect for 60 days after the state of public health emergency ends, even if we weren't making these amendments. The amendments ensure we have these tools beyond the 60 days, if we need them.
- While the state of public health emergency lapsed on June 15, this did not remove or impact the existing orders that Dr. Hinshaw has put in place. Nor does it impact her ability to issue additional orders as needed in the days ahead.

## Now that the state of public health emergency has ended, does this mean the pandemic is over? Can our lives go back to normal now?

- The COVID-19 virus is still with us but infection rates continue to be stable and manageable for the health care system.
  - In order to continue to move forward with reopening the economy, each Albertan must remain vigilant in preventing the spread of COVID-19. This means practicing physical distancing and good hand hygiene; following public health orders; and getting tested, even if you are not experiencing symptoms. Testing provides us with the data necessary to monitor the spread of COVID-19 as we move forward with relaunch.

## MISERICORDIA HOSPITAL OUTBREAK

### What is the current situation?

- Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital remains closed to new patients because of a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Alberta Health Services and Covenant Health are monitoring the situation. For updates, please visit [covenanthealth.ca](https://covenanthealth.ca)