

Memorandum

Date: March 16, 2020

To:

From: Sharon Carroll – Program Manager, Bella Coola General Hospital
Dr. Jeffrey Peimer – Local Medical Director, Bella Coola General Hospital

Re: COVID-19 – Community Information Bulletin

Coordinated on behalf of Nuxalk Nation Health/Wellness, Central Coast Regional District and Emergency Coordination Officer, Bella Coola General Hospital Emergency Management Committee and VCH

Updates for March 16, 2020:

We do not have any confirmed cases of Covid-19 in our community to date. Dr. Erika Cheng would provide further local communications to individuals who test positive in our area. We continue to meet and coordinate efforts to plan and prepare our local resources.

This update is to further clarify who will or will not be tested for Covid 19 in our community as of March 16, 2020 and to provide information on how to self-isolate in our homes if symptoms of fever, shortness of breath, or cough develop. Please also read the VCH patient information handout for general information about self-isolation.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. Most people only have mild symptoms or none at all. If you have no symptoms, or only mild symptoms, then do NOT come to the clinic or hospital. You will not be eligible for testing and you will be asked to go home and self-isolate. If you have chest pain or difficulty breathing, or other severe illness, call the Bella Coola Medical Clinic: 250-799-5342 or 8-1-1 for for guidance.

The following recommendations will help you prepare for self-isolating in your home:

- If you have symptoms, it is very important that you self-isolate for 14 days. After 14 days, if you feel better, you may return to what you normally do.
- During your self-isolation, stay at least 3 feet away from others in your home.
- Stay and sleep in a well-ventilated room separate from other people.
- Use a separate bathroom if available.
- Do not have any visitors. It is ok to have friends/family drop off food outside your door or you can use delivery/pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.
- Do not prepare food for others in your household until 5 days after symptoms go away.
- Avoid sharing household items - Do not share dishes, cups, spoons, forks, knives, towels, bedding, drinks, or eat off the same plate, or bite out of the same piece of food.
- After using dishes, forks, knives, spoons, and towels, wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes – Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough/sneeze, or cough/sneeze into your sleeve or the inside of your shirt instead of your hand. Throw used tissues into a lined trash can in your room before disposal with other household waste. Immediately wash your hands.
- Wash your hands – Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use disposable paper towels when possible. For more information on handwashing see <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthlinkbc-files/hand-washing>. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based sanitizer.
Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet (hand sanitizer will not be good enough after using the toilet). Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Flush toilet with the lid down – the virus may also be present in stool.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces – Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g. counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables) once per day with regular household disinfectant or a solution containing 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- A cough may persist for several weeks and so a cough alone is not a reason to self-isolate past 14 days.
- Drink plenty of fluids and take acetaminophen (Tylenol) for fever and pain.
- Do **NOT** take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), or any other non-steroidal anti-inflammatories.
- Most people fully recover without any complications and require no treatment.
- We know this is hard, but for the health of your family, friends and community, you need to stay at home and do not have visitors.
- Do not go to work or school.
- Do not go to public areas, including places of worship, stores, shopping malls and restaurants.
- Make sure you call to cancel or reschedule appointments. If you have medical travel from the Nuxalk Nation, then make sure you let Nuxalk Travel know if you cancel or reschedule!
- The Bella Coola Medical Clinic will arrange to do phone appointments as required.
- If leaving your home for medical care, do not take buses or ride-sharing where you would be in contact with others.
- You can use delivery/pick up services for groceries or other needs, but avoid face-to-face contact.
 - Face-to-face contact means you are within 1-2 metres (3-6 feet) of another person.

Remember:

If you have symptoms of fever, cough, shortness of breath, or flu-like illness:

- Call Bella Coola Medical Clinic 250-799-5342, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for advice;
- Call 8-1-1 all other times
- If you have symptoms, **DO NOT** just go to the hospital or clinic. Call us ahead of time and we will direct you on what steps to take.
- **Do not visit hospital patients or emergency room patients if you are sick or if you have a cough, fever, cold or shortness of breath**
- Only family members are allowed to visit at this time if they are free of symptoms (we will limit visitor access to 1 -2 family members at a time for short periods)

- Visitors are NOT to use the hospital/acute care kitchenette when visiting.
- Visitors are for family members only, you will not be allowed to visit other patients or walk back and forth amongst/along corridors

If you have no symptoms, you will **NOT** be tested for COVID-19.

If your concerns are not urgent, then avoid coming to the hospital or clinic – we need to prioritize the hospital for urgent and emergent care needs at this time.

Monitor your symptoms – Seek medical attention if you have trouble breathing, if you cannot keep fluids down, develop chest pain or have other emergent issues occurring. Call the ambulance (1-800-461-9911) if your symptoms require immediate care.

More information can be found at www.VCH.ca/COVID19.

Thank you for your cooperation as we continue to work through this pandemic situation. We will continue planning and acting to ensure that resources are in place for our community.