

LATEST UPDATE – FEBRUARY 25, 2022

In an effort to keep our community partners connected, we are providing you with regular COVID-19 updates.

Rapid antigen testing kits

The province has announced everyone will be able to get free rapid antigen testing kits from a pharmacy in their community, starting with people 70 years and older.

The testing kits are free for residents of B.C. 70 years and older who have a Personal Health Number (PHN). For those under the age of 70, kits will be available soon.

Test kits will be available at some pharmacies starting Friday, February 25. An updated list of pharmacies can be found here: www.bcpharmacy.ca/news/covid-19-rapid-test-kits-pharmacies. Residents will be allowed one kit every 28 days to ensure that everyone who wants a kit can get one. You can't pay for additional kits.

The provincial government notes a test should only be used by people who develop symptoms of COVID-19 and want to confirm a positive or negative result. The tests are not suitable for international travel requirements.

Province launches COVID-19 treatment outpatient virtual service

A new online assessment tool and virtual service has launched for people to see if they could receive and benefit from COVID-19 anti-viral treatments.

Two therapeutic treatments are approved for people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 who are at high risk of severe disease, and who are not in hospital: Sotrovimab, which must be given through an infusion and requires a visit to a clinic or hospital; and Paxlovid, which is a course of anti-viral pills that can be taken at home. These treatments should be started within five days of developing symptoms to be most effective. These treatments must be prescribed by a health-care provider who helps to determine the risk and benefit for individuals. They are available to:

- those who are clinically extremely vulnerable;
- those who are over 60, not fully vaccinated and have one or more chronic conditions;
and
- those who are over 60, not fully vaccinated and are Indigenous.

British Columbians can now find out if these treatments are right for them through this new virtual service by following the four-step process available online (www.gov.bc.ca/covidtreatments), starting with a self-assessment. A physician and pharmacist team will decide if treatment is safe and appropriate as part of this process.

COVID-19 information sessions for Cantonese and Mandarin speakers

In partnership with [S.U.C.C.E.S.S.](#), [iCON](#) and [UBC](#), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is pleased to support COVID-19 information sessions in Cantonese and Mandarin.

Both information sessions provide up-to-date information on COVID-19, including:

- Understanding COVID-19 variants and benefits of vaccination
- Protecting yourself and your family from COVID-19
- Understanding emerging treatments for COVID-19
- Addressing misinformation

[Click here](#) to register for the upcoming COVID-19 information session in Mandarin (Wednesday, Mar, 2) or [watch](#) the COVID-19 information session in Cantonese (recorded on Wednesday, Feb. 23).

COVID-19 vaccination resources for parents and guardians of children age 5-11

On January 25, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) [strengthened their recommendations](#) on the use of COVID-19 vaccines in children five to 11 years of age. NACI now recommends that a complete series of Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine should be offered to children in this age group who do not have contraindications to the vaccine, with a dosing interval of at least eight weeks between the first and second dose.

VCH has developed a poster and brochure with the goal of providing additional information and resources to parents and guardians of children ages 5 to 11 regarding COVID-19 vaccination. The downloadable and printable poster and brochure are available at vch.ca/pediatricvaccine and are linked below for your quick reference. We encourage you to share these with your clients.

Poster: download and print the COVID-19 vaccination for ages 5 to 11 posters, available in multiple languages: [English](#) | [Traditional Chinese](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Vietnamese](#) | [Korean](#) | [Punjabi](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Tagalog](#) | [Russian](#) | [Japanese](#)

Brochure: download and print the COVID-19 vaccination for ages 5 to 11 brochures, available in multiple languages: [English](#) | [Traditional Chinese](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Vietnamese](#) | [Korean](#) | [Punjabi](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Tagalog](#) | [Russian](#) | [Japanese](#)

VCH vaccination campaign begins to transition

As announced this week by British Columbia's Provincial Health Officer, B.C. has one of the highest vaccinated populations in the world, and demand for vaccine appointments at community clinics has declined. We're now focusing on the delivery of pediatric vaccines to children aged five to 11, and working in partnership with pharmacies to ensure ongoing access to COVID-19 vaccines.

To book a vaccine appointment, [register on the provincial system](#) or call 1-833-838-2323. [Service BC locations](#) can also help you register for a vaccine. Access a full list of VCH vaccination clinics, including pop-up clinics, by visiting <http://www.vch.ca/vaccine>. And get your BC Vaccine Card at gov.bc.ca/vaccinecard, by calling 1-833-838-2323 or from a Service B.C. Centre.

COVID-19 vaccination information and resources, including guidance on how to prepare children for vaccination, can be found on [the BCCDC website](#) and more information on VCH supports for children can be found [here](#). This information is also available in Chinese [Simplified](#) and [Traditional](#) | [Punjabi](#) | [Vietnamese](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Arabic](#)

COVID-19 vaccine update

As of Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, 90.6% (4,514,727) of eligible people five and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 86.1% (4,289,963) have received their second dose.

In addition, 93.2% (4,321,476) of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine, 90.7% (4,203,057) received their second dose and 55.3% (2,562,401) have received a third dose.

Also, 93.6% (4,047,393) of eligible adults in B.C. have received their first dose, 91.1% (3,940,806) received their second dose and 57.4% (2,481,128) have received a third dose.

Ministry of Health update

In the Friday, Feb. 25, 2022, [statement](#) on B.C.'s COVID-19 response, 599 COVID-positive individuals are in hospital and 96 are in intensive care. In the last 24 hours, 12 new deaths have been reported, for an overall total of 2,851.

583 new cases were reported with 91 of those in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) area.

The total number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in B.C. now stands at 347,376 since the start of the pandemic.

VCH upgrades trauma unit at Whistler Health Care Centre

Whistler residents and visitors will continue to receive the highest quality care as essential upgrades have been completed to the trauma unit at the VCH Whistler Health Care Centre. Increased size and functionality of the space, coupled with modernized equipment, will allow medical staff better access to life-saving tools, better serving patients.

Whistler Health Care Centre provides care for more than 22,000 patients and clients each year, with approximately 1,500 people needing critical care. [Learn more.](#)

Know where to go for the right care this winter

Winter can be an exciting time of year, but it also comes with an increase in people visiting the emergency department (ED). While it is important to visit the ED for emergent health issues, non-life threatening urgent and non-urgent conditions can often be effectively managed by urgent primary care centres (UPCCs), family doctors, walk-in clinics or other services. Those who are unsure where to access care can call 8-1-1 for general health guidance and information on services available in their local community.

Both hospitals and community clinics continue to be safe place to access treatment and care. Find out more [here](#) about where and when to seek care this winter.

Access translated resources in the following languages:

Winter care poster in [English](#) | [Chinese Simplified \(简体中文\)](#) | [Traditional \(繁體中文\)](#) | [Punjabi \(ਪੰਜਾਬੀ\)](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Korean \(한국어\)](#) | [Tagalog](#) | [Japanese](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish \(Español\)](#) | [Vietnamese \(Tiếng Việt\)](#)

Winter care postcard in [English](#) | [Chinese Simplified \(简体中文\)](#) | [Traditional \(繁體中文\)](#) | [Punjabi \(ਪੰਜਾਬੀ\)](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Korean \(한국어\)](#) | [Tagalog](#) | [Japanese](#) | [Farsi](#) | [Russian](#) | [Spanish \(Español\)](#) | [Vietnamese \(Tiếng Việt\)](#)

Community engagement opportunities

VCH values community input. Please consider participating in or sharing the featured community engagement opportunities below:

- [Feedback - Powell River Hospital maternal care satisfaction survey](#) ***new***
Powell River General Hospital's maternal care team has developed a patient experience survey for mothers who have delivered at the hospital. We would like your feedback on the patient experience survey so that we can make it clearer and streamlined.
- [Advisor recruitment - Treatment resistant psychosis](#) ***new***
VCH's South Mental Health and Substance Use team (SMHSU) is working to improve health outcomes for persons with treatment resistant psychosis, including through optimizing medication. The SMHSU team is looking to engage persons with lived experience of treatment resistant psychosis and/or their family members to review their research priorities, develop research plans, and evaluate outcomes.
- [Interviews – Improving access to osteoporosis care](#)
St. Paul's Hospital is working to improve access to osteoporosis care after a person experiences a fragility fracture. You may have experienced a fragility fracture if you fell from standing height and/or with minimal trauma, leading to fracture. We are looking to interview those who have experienced hip, back, leg or arm fragility fractures and had received care at St. Paul's Hospital for the fracture.
- [Assertive Community Treatment Website Development](#)
Navigating information about mental health and substance use (MHSU) services is critical when you or someone you care for is in crisis. Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) is working to create a website that helps MSHU clients, their families and friends to quickly find important information about Assertive Community Treatment (ACT). We want to hear from individuals across the province in a survey, a focus group, and individual interviews for the development of the ACT website.
- [Survey - Medical imaging brochures](#)
Richmond Hospital's medical imaging team has developed medical imaging brochures that will be provided to patients. The goals of these brochures are to decrease the nervousness that some patients may experience before taking medical imaging tests and to help them

become more knowledgeable about the tests. We would like your feedback on the brochures so that we can determine if our messaging is clear and if not, how it can be improved from your perspective.

- Engagement Report -- COVID-19 Vaccine Survey: [Read the report](#) to learn more about how community members helped shape our early vaccine communications strategy.

VCH community engagement opportunities can be found on our [Engage VCH](#) homepage. And visit select completed engagement projects [here](#).

Other resources

Find the Provincial Health Officer's orders [here](#).

To see a map of **COVID-19 cases by local health area**, visit [here](#).

For the **latest medical updates**, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

For **community engagement opportunities** at VCH, see: <https://engage.vch.ca/>

Thank you

We appreciate the time you spend reading these updates and hope you find the information and resources useful. If you no longer wish to receive the VCH Community Partner Update, please reply or send an email to ce@vch.ca with the word "unsubscribe". Thank you.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that our places of work and the Vancouver Coastal Health facilities lie on the traditional homelands of the First Nation Communities of the Heiltsuk, Kitasoo-Xai'xais, Lil'wat, x^wməθk^wəyəm, N'Quatqua, Nuxalk, Samahquam, shíshálh, Skatin, Squamish, Tla'amin, Tsleil-Waututh, Ulkatcho, Wuikinuxv, and Xa'xtsa.