



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

*The latest from Northern Health*

September 22, 2021

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## COVID-19

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### Northern BC community immunization coverage

For vaccination information for specific communities in the Northern Health region (including first and second dose counts and percentages), please visit our [Northern BC community immunization coverage page](#). This information is updated every Wednesday (update date is on the top left).

### Vax for BC

If you haven't got vaccinated yet or if it's been more than 28 days since your first dose, get vaccinated now at a drop-in, mobile or special event clinic. Roll up your sleeve and stop the spread of COVID-19.

Visit the [Vax for BC website](#) for more information.

### Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic high call volume

The recent surge in COVID-19 activity in the North and across the province is resulting in high call volumes to the Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic, which is one of the routes by which northern BC residents can be assessed and referred for COVID-19 testing. We are working to increase capacity for this resource, and we appreciate your patience in the interim.

We encourage people to use the BC [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if they need to be tested for COVID-19. Primary Care Providers (family physicians) can also arrange for testing.

People should self-isolation right away if they have [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#). Follow the instructions for [How to Self-Isolate](#) to reduce the spread of the virus.

## Community Toolkit

To empower local partners to share helpful information, we have created a [COVID-19 Community Toolkit](#) - a digital resource for community partners, which includes vaccine clinic information (including [clinic schedules](#)), a community guide, trusted information and links, and more!

## BC vaccination coverage rates and COVID-19 activity

### BCCDC COVID-19 dashboard

Visit the BCCDC [COVID-19 surveillance dashboard](#) for information by local health area (LHA) and community health service area (CHSA).

### COVID-19 Numbers

As of September 21, **10,757** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **921**
- New cases: **79**
- Currently in hospital: **64**
  - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **22**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **169**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the Province of BC [COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested.

As well, for a visual comparison of COVID-19 cases in BC by HSDA to other Canadian and global jurisdictions, see the [COVID-19 Epidemiology app](#). It's updated on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

- [BC COVID-19 pandemic update](#) – September 21, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – September 15, 2021

## Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health Virtual Primary and Community Care Clinic: **1-844-645-7811**
- Northern Health Environmental Health Officer Line: **1-250-565-7322**
- Non-medical info: call 1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 webpage](#).

## Overdose prevention and response

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### Benzodiazepines continue to contaminate illicit opioids

Illicit Benzodiazepines or “Benzos” contaminating street drugs continue to circulate in the NH region. Benzodiazepines, or benzos, are a type of medication that “depresses” or slows down your brain activity. When benzos are mixed with opioids (down) there is a higher risk of overdose. People who have overdosed using drugs contaminated with benzos may be difficult to rouse, may remain unconscious and slow to respond to naloxone. Giving naloxone is recommended in case an opioid is also present.

**If you suspect someone is experiencing a benzos-related overdose, it is very important to:**

- Call [9-1-1](#) for help.
- Open airway and give rescue breaths, continue giving breaths if needed
- Give naloxone if you have it, multiple doses might be needed but only give more doses if the person is NOT breathing at least 10 times a minute.

For more information on how to respond to an opioid overdose with benzos, see the Toward the Heart resource: [Benzos with Opioids](#).

More information on this Overdose Alert can be found on the NH website: [Overdose Emergency Information](#).

## Organizational news

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### First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program and virtual substance use and psychiatry service

The First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) created the [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day program](#) to make primary health care easily accessible to First Nations people across British Columbia.

If people in BC or their family members do not have access to a doctor, or have lost access because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they can call 1.855.344.3800 to book an appointment with the Virtual Doctor of the Day in their region. This service is available 7 days a week, 8:30am to 4:30pm.

All First Nations people who live in BC are eligible for this service – and so are their family members, even if those family members are not Indigenous. There are no age limits.

The FNHA also has the [Virtual Substance Use and Psychiatry Service](#), which provides individuals with access to specialists in addictions medicine and psychiatry as well as mental health and wellness care coordinators. Patients are referred to this service through the First Nations Doctor of the Day Program.

Please share this information and the below resources with your patients or in your community.

More information:

- [FNHA Doctor of the Day FAQ](#)
- [Instructions for accessing FNHA Doctor of the Day program](#)
- Posters: [A](#), [B](#), [C](#), [D](#), [E](#)

## **NEW Long-term Care/Assisted Living update – Issue 28: Information for residents and families**

The long-term care task group is producing updates once a month for residents and families of long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.

[Issue 28](#) of the long-term care and assisted living digest is now available. This issue provides an update on the new Public Health Order re: COVID-19 Vaccination Status Information & Preventive Measures Order, the changes to masking, a reminder about social gatherings, and information on the antipsychotic reduction work happening across some Northern Health facilities.