



COMMUNITY UPDATE

The latest from Northern Health

December 8, 2021

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COVID-19

Northern Health celebrates over 82 per cent COVID-19 immunization

In Northern BC, over 82% of the population aged 12 and over are immunized with at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

This success is due to the tireless efforts of the Northern Health staff and vaccine planning teams, the First Nations Health Authority, our community partners and stakeholders, and Northern BC residents who recognize the importance of protecting themselves, their families and their communities, so that we can get through this pandemic. Thank you to everyone who has helped us achieve this milestone!

Vaccination clinics are still running across the North, including opportunities for 5-11 year olds to receive their first dose. Visit the [NH website for clinic details](#) in your community.

For more stories like this, visit the [Northern Health Stories site](#).

COVID-19 immunization plan

Pediatric dose

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is now available for children 5 to 11. This vaccine uses a lower dose (10 micrograms), at one-third of the dose formulated for older children and adults, which will provide effective protection tailored to children's immune systems. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) advises that children receive a two-dose series of the vaccine with an interval of eight weeks or more between the first and second dose.

For more information about this vaccine (including information about the vaccine and how to register a youth), please see [COVID-19 vaccines for children 5 to 11](#).

Third dose

The third dose of the COVID-19 vaccination is for some people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised. People who need a third dose [will be contacted](#) by the provincial [Get Vaccinated](#) system.

Third dose immunizations will be by appointment only, they are not available for walk-ins.

Booster dose

The booster dose is an additional non-urgent, non-compulsory vaccine that gets immunity back up to a desirable level of protection for an extended period of time. It will be available starting in January 2022.

To book a booster dose, please ensure you're registered in the [Get Vaccinated](#) system. If you have difficulty accessing online booking, please call 1-833-838-2323.

Booster dose shots will be by appointment only, they are not available for walk-ins.

COVID-19 orders

For information about current Provincial orders (such as the acute- and long-term care visitors policy, and restrictions around gatherings and events), please see:

- [NH Orders and FAQ resources](#)
- [NH Public Health COVID-19 Order Enforcement Actions](#)
- [Provincial and regional restrictions](#)

For complaints or concern related to orders, please call [250-565-7322](tel:250-565-7322) or email php@northernhealth.ca.

Please note that changes to the orders reflect the ongoing risk of COVID-19, rates of transmission, and the impact they continue to have on health care resources.

Northern BC community immunization coverage

Immunization coverage for every community in Northern Health is available for you on the [Northern BC community immunization coverage page](#). This link includes both first and second dose counts and percentages per community and is updated every week.

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 December 7, **17,877** cases have been reported in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic.

- Cases currently active: **261**
- New cases: **25**
- Currently in hospital: **9**
 - Currently in ICU level care in hospital: **9**
- Deaths in the NH region since the beginning of the pandemic: **262**

For the latest provincial numbers, see the [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](#) – December 7, 2021
- [BCCDC Situation Report](#) – December 1, 2021

Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Northern Health online booking form - COVID-19 test](#)
- [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

Overdose alert for the Quesnel area

Due to an increase in overdose events in the community of Quesnel, Northern Health and the First Nations Health Authority issued a joint overdose alert on December 2, 2021.

Despite this being a community specific alert, please share broadly, as we know that substances move throughout our region and may present in other communities:

- The reported substance is light purple/blue in powder/pebbles, and when broken apart it turns pink. It is sold as down.

- It is highly toxic, causes heavy and prolonged sedation and requires more naloxone to reverse.
- Overdoses are occurring when the substance is injected.
- One of the first signs of overdose is choking, gurgling, or snoring sounds

Key Messaging

- Don't use alone, if possible use an OPS
- If you have to use alone use [Lifeguard](#) or [Be Safe](#) apps.
- Don't mix with other substances
- Carry and know how to use naloxone
- Call 911 or your local emergency number right away if someone overdoses.

Direct Links

- [Story Link](#)
- [Overdose Page](#)
- [Printable Poster](#)

Alert expires December 15, 2021

Organizational news

Northern Health Connections modified holiday schedule 2021

The Northern Health (NH) Connections program will run on a modified schedule starting December 21, leading up to a holiday season break.

NH Connections provides transportation for clients travelling to non-emergent health services outside their home communities. A variety of routes connect communities across Northern BC, along with service to Vancouver. Demand for the service typically drops over the holiday season as fewer people book health care appointments.

Starting December 21, NH Connections buses will begin their last routes for 2021. Regular routes will resume the week of January 6, 2022.

Please visit the [Northern Health Stories site for schedule details](#).

Register for Let's Talk Northern Health

[Let's Talk Northern Health](#) is an online platform that Northern Health launched in 2020 to keep community members informed about construction and renovation projects (also called "capital projects") – and to get your feedback on those projects.

We use [Let's Talk Northern Health](#) to keep people informed about projects, ask and answer questions, and much more.

Anyone can visit the site and read the information to stay informed. But to “talk” to us on the site – for example, to ask a question, post a comment, or participate in a survey – you need to register.

For more information and to continue reading about the Let’s Talk platform, please visit the [Northern Health Stories site](#).

Long-term Care/Assisted Living Digest – Issue 32: 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 32](#) of the long-term care and assisted living digest is now available. This issue provides updated information on visitor restrictions, holiday celebrations, and bringing food and gifts into long-term care homes and assisted living facilities.