

# COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS)

May 20, 4:30 pm

COVID-19 – THE DISEASE, SYMPTOMS, ITS SPREAD AND PRECAUTIONS .....	2
ABTRACETOGETHER MOBILE APP .....	4
TESTING .....	5
ISOLATION .....	7
ENFORCEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS .....	9
TRAVEL AND CARPOOLING .....	11
TRAVEL – RE-LAUNCH STAGE 1 .....	13
MASKS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) .....	16
FOOD HANDLING .....	20
RESTRICTIONS ON GATHERINGS .....	20
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES .....	22
COHORT FAMILIES .....	23
BLOOD DONATIONS .....	24
BILLING CODE FOR DOCTORS .....	24
ESSENTIAL SERVICE WORKERS .....	24
EXPECTANT PARENTS .....	25
CONTINUING CARE .....	26
NON-COVID-19 HEALTHCARE .....	27
COMMUNICATING WITH ALBERTANS .....	29
RE-LAUNCH (Stage 1) .....	29

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

## What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) is the official name for the disease causing the novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan, China and now spread around the world.

## What are the symptoms?

- COVID-19 symptoms can be mild and 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).
  - Symptom of serious illness: difficulty breathing or pneumonia.
- Most people recover without needing medical treatment. 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?

- COVID-19 is transmitted through tiny droplets of liquid produced by people who have the virus.
- These droplets spread by:
  - coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing, and singing
  - touching objects or surfaces the virus has landed on and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth (bath towels, kitchen utensils, door knobs, etc.)
- 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 indicates COVID-19 is not airborne, which means it doesn'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 may be possible for it to survive several days under some conditions.

## 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. 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 are those who have been tested and found positive for the virus. Probable cases are ones who haven't been tested but are symptomatic and have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

## We've been told there is a case in X? 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 determine anyone who may have been exposed to the virus.
- Anyone at risk of being exposed is directly contacted by AHS and required to isolate. Anyone who has not been contacted is not at risk.
- To enhance our contact tracing ability, download the [ABTraceTogether](#) app and use it when you are in public.
  - With your consent, the ABTraceTogether app exchanges Bluetooth proximity data with nearby phones running the same app. This data is anonymized and encrypted, and does not reveal your identity or the other person's identity. In order 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.
- COVID-19 is spread by close contact. It is not airborne like measles, so the sort of general notifications used for diseases like measles are not appropriate.
- Our top priority is protecting the health of Albertans. In the rare event where health officials determine there is a broader risk to anyone who may have attended a specific site, we promptly alert Albertans. An example of this was potential exposure at the BC dental conference in March.

## Is the virus transmitted through animals? Is it transmitted through water?

- 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.

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

- Currently, there is no strong 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 drugs to prevent hospitalization for people at the high risk of developing severe symptoms of COVID-19?

- Yes. The Alberta Hope COVID-19 study will recruit 1,600 Albertans to determine whether a prescribed five-day treatment of hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) can prevent hospitalization for those at highest risk of developing a severe illness.
- HCQ was originally an anti-malarial drug, and it is currently used to treat immunological disorders like rheumatoid arthritis. Laboratory studies suggest it may be helpful against COVID-19.

## 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 where mobile devices exchange Bluetooth-enabled secure encrypted tokens when another device with the app installed is detected nearby. 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 anonymized and encrypted, and does not reveal your identity or the other person's identity. In order 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:
  - any person exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19
  - asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases
  - asymptomatic workers and residents at outbreak sites
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health continues to examine and adjust testing protocols and access to tests based on the changing situation in Alberta. For example, asymptomatic residents in the Calgary Zone who work outside the home were eligible to be tested until May 17.
- 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:
  - diagnose and treat individuals at greatest risk
  - 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?

- As of May 17, there have been 196,309 people tested for COVID-19, and 213,078 total tests have been completed.
- 3,761 tests have been completed in the last 24 hours.
- For testing data, visit <https://covid19stats.alberta.ca>.

### Part of the Relaunch Strategy will involve 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 can I expect during the testing experience?

- Visit [www.ahs.ca/covid](http://www.ahs.ca/covid) and complete the online self-assessment tool to determine if you should receive testing for COVID-19.
- You will be contacted to confirm your symptoms and discuss next steps which may include a referral for testing.
- 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 \(ahs.ca/results\)](http://ahs.ca/results) for further information regarding next steps.

### If someone was ill with symptoms but now feels fine, can they still be tested? Should they?

- If 10 days have passed after the onset of their first symptom, and they are no longer symptomatic, they do not require testing at this time.

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

- Individuals 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.
- Individuals with any COVID-19 symptoms or who meet any of the asymptomatic testing criteria are asked to 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 guide the individual to answer questions about their symptoms and take them through steps to help determine whether they need testing.
- People who are in immediate distress from symptoms such as severe difficulty breathing or chest pain should 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. If you have been tested for COVID, you will be called directly with your test results.

## 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 come in close contact with them. 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.

## What is serological testing and when will Alberta begin doing it?

- Serological testing is used to detect the presence of antibodies in a person's blood. A positive test indicates a person has contracted COVID-19 at some point at least two to three weeks ago, even if they have now recovered.
- Serology tests cannot be used to diagnose an infection.
- Alberta's provincial laboratory is in the final stages of validating a number of serology tests. The first tests may begin as early as June.
- Initially, the testing will be used for research purposes to determine the proportion of Albertans that have been exposed to COVID-19.
- More information will be shared as it becomes available.

# 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 are to be quarantined for 14 days from their last exposure to the individual 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.

### **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](#).

### **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 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.
- Through amendments to the Procedures Regulation under the *Provincial Offences Procedures Act*, community peace officers, in addition to police, can issue tickets to enforce COVID-19 public health orders.
- Fines administered through tickets 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.

## What specific public health orders are subject to fines for violation?

- Anyone who has travelled outside of Canada must go into mandatory isolation for 14 days from their return, plus an additional 10 days from the onset of any symptoms should they occur, whichever is longer.
- Anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms must isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the start of their symptoms, or until the symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
  - If you are tested and the result is negative for COVID-19, you are not legally required to isolate.
- Anyone who has been identified by Alberta Health Services as a close contact of a person(s) with COVID-19 must go into mandatory isolation for 14 days from the date of last having been exposed to COVID-19, plus an additional 10 days from the onset of any symptoms should they occur, whichever is longer.
- Outdoor gatherings must be limited to no more than 50 attendees. Indoor gatherings are limited to 15 people.
- Albertans are prohibited from attending some businesses at this time. Check online for the latest details at <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>
- Businesses that can continue to provide services at locations accessible to the public must have proper risk mitigation measures in place, such as sanitation stations and appropriate distancing between customers.
- Movie theatres, theatres, pools, recreation centres, arenas, spas, gyms and nightclubs will remain closed.
- Visitors may not enter any continuing care facility (long-term care or licensed supportive living), except for visits from a designated essential visitor:
  - when a resident is at the end of their life
  - where the resident's quality of life or care needs cannot be met without the designated essential visitor's assistance

## 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.

## TRAVEL AND CARPOOLING

### Are people allowed to carpool?

- If possible, avoid carpooling with people from outside your household. If carpooling is necessary, take steps to keep all occupants safe, such as:
  - Limiting the number of people in the vehicle where possible to maintain two metres social distance
  - Ensuring all occupants wear masks and wash their hands before entering the vehicle
  - Cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, seatbelt buckles and arm rests after each trip

### 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.

### 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.

### 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 campgrounds, summer homes, cabins and cottages within Alberta is permitted. Physical distancing and gathering restrictions 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:
  - pack your own food and stop for gas only if necessary
  - take all necessary precautions to protect your health and the health of others

### 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.

### 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.

## TRAVEL – RE-LAUNCH STAGE 1

### 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.
- This initiative will be implemented in phases.
  - In phase one, travellers arriving at the Edmonton and Calgary airports from outside Canada will be required to pass a provincial check point, undergo a temperature check using an infrared camera and complete an Alberta isolation questionnaire. This phase was implemented May 20.
  - In phase two, to be implemented in a couple of weeks, similar measures will be established at the Alberta / U.S. Coutts border crossing, which is the busiest international land border crossing in the province.
- 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.

### 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 fill out 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 fill out 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 a vulnerable person residing in the place they plan to isolate.
- 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?

- People can print the Alberta isolation questionnaire and bring the completed document with them when they arrive in Alberta. Paper copies are also available at the provincial checkpoint.
- The Alberta isolation questionnaire is available at <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-travel-advice.aspx>.

### 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 expected to be released shortly.
- 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?

- Phase two will roll out in a couple of weeks.
- When implemented, 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](mailto:HiaHelpDesk@gov.ab.ca).

## 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 [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](#).
- 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 that 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 [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 while using it
  - 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.

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

- The provincial government is working on organizing the public distribution of non-medical masks.
- More information will be shared as it becomes available.

## 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.aspx](https://alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx).

## 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.

### Is PPE being provided to family physicians and first responders like firefighters, paramedics and other non-healthcare personnel? How do they request PPE if needed?

- The Alberta government is coordinating province-wide requests from municipalities and select non-government organizations for personal protective equipment supplies for non-health related organizations and essential service providers.
- This equipment includes hand sanitizer, wipes, disinfectants, masks, gloves and safety eyewear. We are using Alberta suppliers as much as possible.
- Requests can be made to [pessecc-logistics@gov.ab.ca](mailto:pessecc-logistics@gov.ab.ca) or directly on 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 vulnerable 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.
- As always 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://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.

## 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?

- Unless otherwise identified in public health orders, such as workplaces, places of worship, or in restaurants, gatherings of:
  - more than 15 people are not allowed in one indoor location
  - more than 50 people are not allowed in one outdoor location

- 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?

- Worship leaders are encouraged to continue holding worship services and funerals remotely, but can offer multiple services to reduce attendance to 50 people or one-third of normal attendance, whichever is smaller and whichever ensures physical distancing will be maintained.
- Places of worship are encouraged to offer virtual or live-streamed activities instead of in-person events.
- If gatherings happen, there must be proper mitigation measures in place.
- More information can be found in [Guidance for places of worship](#).

### How can people stay safe at small 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 small 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 gathering restrictions [online](#).
- Some gatherings identified are in public health orders to be exempt, such as certain businesses, places of worship, shelters, industrial work camp dining facilities or in restaurants. These facilities must still follow public health orders and risk mitigation strategies.
- Public transit is exempt, however, providers are obligated to take steps to prevent the risk of transmission of infection. The use of masks is strongly recommended in certain specific crowded public spaces, like mass transit, that do not allow for physical distancing (2 metres apart).

## 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.
  - Limit outdoor gatherings to no more than 50 people
  - 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
    - outdoor gun ranges
- For more information, view [guidance for outdoor activities](#).

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

- Communal meals, such as barbeques, 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. They are not recommended.

### What about activities like playing catch or jumping on a trampoline?

- COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching objects or surfaces the virus has landed on then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. As such, activities that involve multiple people touching the same object or surface are not recommended, unless everyone playing is part of the same household or cohort family.

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

- Under recent health orders, an activity is not allowed to proceed if it involves:
  - league play, events, festivals or competitions
  - any outdoor event or gathering of more than 50 people, including private gatherings such as backyard barbecues and weddings
  - a situation where physical distancing isn't possible – people are required to maintain 2 metres (6 feet) from each other, unless they are from the same household
  - attending most public recreation and private entertainment facilities, such as:
    - swimming pools and gyms
    - casinos and bingo halls

### Can I hold a garage sale?

- You should not hold garage sales at this time due to public health orders to maintain physical distancing and restricting both indoor and outdoor gatherings.
- In addition, many municipalities currently have additional rules or states of emergency in place that prohibit them.

## COHORT FAMILIES

### What is a cohort family?

- Members of one household can partner with another household to create a cohort family.
- This is an agreement to maintain physical distancing from everyone else.
- Members of a cohort family can support to 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?

- While there is no definite number, each cohort must be contained to a small group of 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)

## BILLING CODE FOR DOCTORS

### Is there a billing code for doctors to use when they are dealing with COVID-19 remotely?

- Alberta Health has activated a billing code, known as 03.01AD, which was also used during the H1N1 response. Physicians have received a bulletin on the code which will allow them to bill for phone calls they are receiving regarding COVID-19.

## 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?

- 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 a Cargill?

- We continue to closely monitor the situation at the Kearl Work Camp, as well as at Cargill and at JBS, which have all had outbreaks.
- Employees currently on site at Kearl were swabbed as an added measure for outbreak control. Similar testing is being made available for workers at Cargill and JBS.
- As a precaution, all workers who were at the Kearl work camp prior to April 16, when the outbreak was confirmed and control measures were put in place, were required to self isolate for 14 days after leaving the camp.

### 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.
  - Precautions include cleanliness, good personal hygiene, and proper hand washing as often as necessary to prevent contamination of food or food areas.
  - Employees must stay home if they show any COVID-19 symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, or runny nose.

## 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 COVID19.
- 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.

## 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.

### 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 vulnerable individuals living and working in these facilities are kept as safe as possible.
- Visit [Protecting residents at congregate care facilities](#) for more information.

## NON-COVID-19 HEALTHCARE

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

- To ensure Albertans continue to have access to essential medications and to help pharmacists address this situation, we will be recommending that pharmacies provide a maximum 30-day supply of prescription drugs.
- We recognize this means that Albertans will need to refill their prescriptions more often.
- Albertans should speak with their pharmacist about when it is appropriate to fill their prescriptions.
- To assist with the added cost, those with Alberta government-sponsored drug coverage will pay a lower co-payment of up to \$8 per prescription for a 30 day supply. The current co-payment is up to \$25 per prescription.
- Other provinces are implementing similar supply measures to ensure a consistent approach across the country.

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

- AHS is not cancelling Home Care. That 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>
- We recommend any non-essential visits are postponed at this time.
- You may also download the Babylon by Telus Health App.

## 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'.

## RE-LAUNCH (Stage 1)

### What is happening in the first stage of relaunch?

- Starting May 14, some businesses and services can reopen in all areas of Alberta, except the cities of Calgary and Brooks:
  - Retail businesses, such as clothing, furniture and bookstores. All vendors at farmers markets will also be able to operate.
  - Museums and art galleries.
  - Daycares and out-of-school care, with limits on occupancy.
  - Hairstyling and barber shops.
  - Cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars will be permitted to reopen for table service only at 50 per cent capacity.
  - Day camps, including summer school will be permitted, with limits on occupancy.
  - Post-secondary institutions will continue to deliver courses; there will be more flexibility to include in-person delivery, once the existing health order prohibiting in-person classes is lifted.
  - Places of worship and funeral services, if they follow specific guidance already [online](#).
  - The 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.

- The relaunch in the cities of Calgary and Brooks will be more gradual over 18 days due to higher COVID-19 case numbers in these communities.
  - Opening May 14:
    - Retail businesses and all farmers market vendors
    - Museums and art galleries
    - Daycares and out-of-school care, with limits on occupancy
    - Some scheduled, non urgent surgeries will continue to resume gradually
    - Regulated health professions, with guidance set by professional colleges
  - Opening May 25:
    - Hairstyling and barbershops
    - Cafes, restaurants, pubs and bars (table service only; 50 per cent capacity)
  - Opening June 1:
    - Day camps, including summer school, with limits on occupancy
    - Post-secondary institutions will continue to deliver courses; there will be more flexibility to include in-person delivery, once the existing health order prohibiting in-person classes is lifted.
    - Places of worship and funeral services, if they follow specific guidance already [online](#).

### Why is relaunch different for the cities of Calgary and Brooks?

- Given the higher number of cases in Calgary and Brooks, relaunch will be more gradual over 18 days with some businesses and services resuming May 14 and others resuming May 25 and June 1.
- The sequencing is based on a thorough risk-analysis by public health officials that considers both public health risks and economic impact.
- A 10-day window between groups of activities allows us to monitor the potential for disease spread, as well as public health measures in the community and within opened businesses.
- Those living in Calgary and Brooks are encouraged to wait to access services in their communities, rather than travelling for services.

### What activities are still not permitted in stage 1?

- Indoor gatherings of more than 15 people unless otherwise identified in [public health orders](#) or [guidance](#). As of May 15, outdoor gatherings were expanded to allow up to 50 people. All gatherings must follow physical distancing and existing public health orders and guidance.
- Arts and culture festivals, major sporting events and concerts, all of which involve close physical contact.
- Movie theatres, theatres, pools, recreation centres, arenas, spas, gyms, nightclubs and casinos will remain closed.
- Visitors to patients at health-care facilities will continue to be limited; however, outdoor visits are allowed with a designated essential visitor and one other person (a group of up to three people, including the resident), where space permits. However, physical distancing must be practiced and all visitors must wear a mask or some other form of face covering.
- In-school classes for kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

### What important things should Albertans consider/do during stage 1?

- You can go out, but be sure to do it safely.

- 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.
- 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 2 metres is difficult.

### Has relaunch changed rules on physical distancing? Does relaunch mean freedom to move around like before?

- As the first stage of relaunch begins, it doesn't mean we can lower our guard.
- Physical distancing requirements of two metres remain in place through all stages of relaunch and 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.
- Rules restricting indoor gatherings of more than 15 people remain, unless otherwise identified in [public health orders](#) or [guidance](#). As of May 15, outdoor gatherings were expanded to allow up to 50 people. Any activity involving groups of people require people outside of your household or cohort family to keep two metres/six feet between individuals.
- Albertans are also encouraged to wear non-medical masks when out in public places where keeping a distance of 2 metres is difficult.

### Why did government decide the province was ready to reopen some businesses and services?

- With enhanced testing capacity and contact tracing ability, along with a rapid response plan in place in the event of possible outbreaks, the province is ready to take the first incremental steps to reopen some businesses and services.
- Thanks to the ongoing efforts of Albertans, the province has been successful at flattening the curve.

### Why are certain businesses and communities able to reopen on May 14, while others have to wait?

- Stage one puts safety first as restrictions are gradually lifted and Albertans get back to work.
- It considers things like the proximity between patrons and staff, sectors that have been highly impacted by COVID 19, and sectors that are foundational to the labour market and/or supply chain.

### Many people are still feeling anxious. Are you sure this is the right time to reopen businesses?

- It is okay to feel anxious.
- Stage one of Alberta's relaunch puts safety first as restrictions are gradually lifted.
- Continue to follow the public health advice. It will keep you safe as you go out, and protect your family, friends and neighbours.
- Be thoughtful and intentional in your outings, shop for what you need. Take appropriate precautions, wash your hands, practice physical distancing and stay home if you are sick.
- Download the ABTraceTogether app to use when you go out to help contact tracers identify individuals who may come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

### Do businesses that are allowed to re-open on May 14 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.
- 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 stage one will be subject to strict infection prevention and controls, and will be carefully monitored for compliance with public health orders.
- The new [alberta.ca/bizconnect](https://alberta.ca/bizconnect) 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)

### What will my business need to do to reopen?

- Businesses will need to follow existing public health orders and guidance documents.
- Government has provided a template businesses can fill out as they determine how they will comply with the requirements and guidance. This document may be helpful in demonstrating to staff and customers how the business owner will prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- This template and relevant guidance documents are available online at [alberta.ca/biz-connect](https://alberta.ca/biz-connect).

### Which businesses need to complete a COVID relaunch plan in order to reopen during stage 1?

- None. The [relaunch plan template for businesses](#) is voluntary.

### What do I do if I see businesses that are not complying with public health orders and guidance?

- Businesses allowed to re-open during stage one will be subject to strict infection prevention and control measures, and will be carefully monitored for compliance with public health orders.
- If Albertans are concerned that businesses are not following public health orders, they can:
  - remind the business owner or operator that not following public health orders is against the law and puts people at risk
  - submit a complaint to AHS public health inspectors



- Submit a complaint online through the alberta.ca website
- Call 1-833-415-9179 to submit a complaint by leaving a message when prompted.
- Complaints that require an immediate response can also be reported to your local police force through their administrative phone line. Please do not call municipal 911 services.

### **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](#).

### **Will childcare be available for people returning to work whose kids are normally in school?**

- Childcare programs will be able to reopen to the public in Stage 1 of Alberta's relaunch strategy beginning May 14.
- More information is available [online](#).

### **Should I continue to work from home?**

- Remote working is advised where possible.

### **What does stage 1 mean for health services provided by AHS, such as diagnostic imaging and scheduled/elective surgeries?**

- Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Covenant Health are resuming some ambulatory care and diagnostic imaging (DI) services beginning the week of May 11, 2020.
- Regarding scheduled and elective surgeries, AHS will resume some scheduled, day surgeries in all five zones beginning in May.
- Surgeries and procedures will be prioritized using established prioritization processes with patients at greatest need and those waiting the longest receiving care first.
- A centralized booking office will coordinate surgery and procedure planning in each zone and AHS will begin contacting Albertans currently on wait-lists in the coming days to reschedule their procedures. Do not call 811 or the clinic for information – Albertans will be contacted directly.
- Urgent and emergency surgery, as well as oncology and scheduled caesarean procedures, will continue.
- Non-essential laboratory testing continues to be paused.
- Visit the [AHS website](#) for more information.

### **Can I travel?**

- 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

### What does stage 1 mean for places of worship?

- Services can have an attendance of up to 50 people or one-third of normal worship attendance, whichever is smaller and ensures physical distancing can be maintained.
- Worship leaders are encouraged to continue to hold services remotely and use other creative mechanisms such as drive-in services.
- Guidance for places of worship can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/biz-connect.aspx>.

### Has stage 1 changed anything for gatherings such as weddings and funerals?

- The [places of worship guidance](#) applies to wedding ceremonies and funerals.
- These events must be kept to 50 people or 1/3 of the normal worship service attendance, whichever is smaller and will ensure physical distancing will be maintained.
- Rules restricting gatherings of more than 15 people remain in place for other indoor gatherings, however as of May 15, outdoor gatherings may allow up to 50 people.
- All gatherings must occur in a space that allows for mandated physical distancing of at least 2 metres from each other.

### Why has my city/town closed places that aren't specifically spelled out in the directions from the Chief Medical Officer of Health?

- Local authorities may choose to close additional facilities at their discretion, but may not relax or reduce the provincial restrictions.

### 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.

### When will we be able to move to stage 2 and stage 3 of relaunch?

- It is too soon to say.
- We will need to evaluate our success in stage 1 before we can consider the next stages of re-opening.
- Considerations will include health-care system capacity, hospitalization and intensive care unit (ICU) cases, and infection rates.