

Up-to-date information as of April 9th, 2020***

COVID-19 NEWSLETTER

MNBC MINISTRY OF HEALTH - ISSUE 04



Issue 4: Highlights

COVID-19 survey. Easter update.

Staying connected over the Easter weekend. Increase support for mental health services. Safe Seniors, Strong Communities program. Temporary emergency child care for essential workers. BC Parks closure. Messages of thanks, and more.

If you know of someone in need, or are isolated yourself and need assistance,

email covid19@mnbc.ca -

MNBC's Health Team will help connect you to available Community supports.



"Let's make this a weekend to unwind and be kind."

Dr. Bonnie Henry

April 9th, 2020



MNBC will be updating our webpage as new information becomes available.

Follow our COVID-19 page at www.mnbc.ca

Please also see previous issues of our COVID-19 newsletter for more information on hand washing, physical distancing (6 feet or 2m apart), and other tips.

COVID-19 SURVEY

**Are you Métis?
How has COVID-19 impacted you?**

MNBC's Ministry of Health invites you to take part in a survey at:

<https://questionnaire.simplesurvey.com/s/mnbc-covid19>

Please share how COVID-19 has affected you personally.

It is our goal is to connect with Métis people from across the province and conduct a fulsome needs assessment.

COVID - 19 Survey



People are welcome to find the link on MNBC's webpage www.mnbc.ca or Facebook page.
Email covid19@mnbc.ca for more info



EASTER UPDATE



SPECIAL EGGS-EMPTION

As Premier of the Province of British Columbia, I hereby authorize

The Easter Bunny

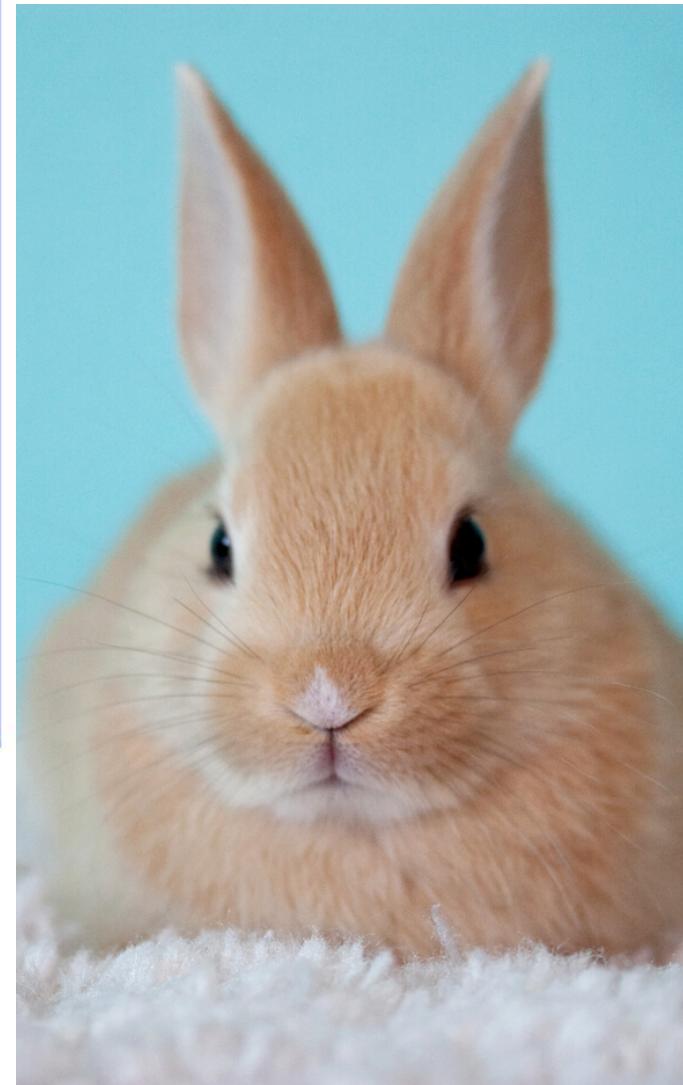
*to travel freely into and throughout
the Province of British Columbia
for the essential service of*

Spreading Eggs-ellent Cheer

Dear Easter Bunny,

I am pleased to welcome you to our province for your annual egg-delivering duties. This year, we're all looking out for our loved ones and festivities look quite different. I know that you're also taking extra care, so even if you can't make it to every home, I want to thank you for sharing your positive spirit and happiness with kids and families across the province.

HONOURABLE JOHN HORGAN
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



STAYING CONNECTED OVER THE EASTER WEEKEND (AND BEYOND!)

With the Easter weekend coming up, it may feel even more difficult to be away from friends and family.

Occasions like Easter, typically bring families together to pray, reflect and celebrate - we know that looks very different for everyone this year.

Though we may not be able to physically be together, it doesn't mean we can't stay connected in other ways.

Spend time together through programs like FaceTime, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts, or Skype. If you need support in setting up Skype, check out this how to guide: <https://mashable.com/2014/07/09/skype-for-beginners/>

Play games together by downloading phone apps like Houseparty. Houseparty lets you video chat with your friends, while playing games together like trivia and pictionary. This app has been designed with COVID-19 in mind. Please stay home and stay safe. Practice physical distancing, not social distancing. Learn more about Houseparty here: <https://houseparty.com/>

Plan fun activities for the family, such as indoor scavenger hunts for kids! <https://kidactivities.net/40-scavenger-hunt-riddles-for-kids/>

We need to take care of one another by staying physically apart.

Our Elders hold our knowledge and traditions.
This Easter, please protect them with distance.



"WE'RE GOING ON A BEAR HUNT!"

From [CTV News](#), "to beat the boredom in places where full lockdown measures are not yet imposed, one idea to keep kids occupied as they go for walks with their family has sprung up and gone viral."

All across Canada, teddy bears and messages of fun are popping up in windows!

It's important to get out for fresh air - while always practicing safe physical distancing. These teddies and messages are meant to bring joy while out for safe walks or drives. Kids can "go on a bear hunt" in their own neighbourhood!

Children are also finding joy in decorating their windows for passers by.

Next time you're out for a walk or a drive, see how many teddies or window messages you can spot!



INCREASED SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN BC

“If you are feeling anxious, stressed, depressed or disconnected because of COVID-19, I want you to know that you are not alone. Our government is working to give you more options for mental health support as we all stay home to prevent the spread of this virus.” - Premier John Horgan (April 9th, 2020)

To support navigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, the BC government has announced \$5 million towards expanding virtual mental health services.

This includes:

- Increasing access to virtual care for Métis, First Nations, and urban Indigenous Peoples.

- Expanding the BounceBack program - an online anxiety management program delivered through the Canadian Mental Health Association of BC.

- Expanding access to no- and low-cost community counselling programs.

- Increasing access to online peer support through CMHA-BC.

- Providing virtual supports for youth aged 12 to 24 through Foundry BC.

- Providing more online tools and resources to support mental health.

- Supporting front-line health-care workers with online peer support through CMHA-BC and through a new online psychological support service through the BC Psychological Association.

The Province will continue to collaborate with Métis, First Nation, and Urban Indigenous partners to ensure these services are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Indigenous peoples in rural and urban areas.

For more information on this announcement, click here:

<https://www.cheknews.ca/bc-government-puts-5-million-toward-expanding-mental-health-programs-during-covid-19-crisis-660676/>

SAFE SENIORS, STRONG COMMUNITIES PROGRAM (211)

BC 211 has recently launched the Safe Seniors, Strong Communities Program.

This program matches seniors who need support with non-medical essentials, to volunteers in their community who are willing to help.

Available services include:

Grocery shopping and delivery

Meal preparation and delivery

Prescription pickup and delivery

Phone and/or virtual friendly visits

To register for services, or to offer help, visit

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe7Vzj7N8JQse47IDKg9lISeYpFZEgO6mPMKMI8BUFDiWdOZg/viewform>

For more information, visit www.bc211.ca



PROVINCIAL SUPPORTS



BC Temporary Rental Supplement Program

BC has announced a new temporary rent supplement will provide up to \$500 per month. This rent top-up will be paid directly to landlords on behalf of the tenant. For more information, visit:

<https://www.bchousing.org/COVID-19>



BC Emergency Benefit for Workers

The BC Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a one-time \$1,000 payment to people who lost income because of COVID-19. Read more by visiting the BC Government website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/covid-19-financial-supports#BCEBW>



BC Hydro

Customers can defer bill payments or arrange for flexible payment plans with no penalty through the COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program. Customers experiencing job loss, illness, or lost wages due to COVID-19 can access grants up to \$600 to pay their hydro bills through the Customer Crisis Fund. Read more by visiting the BC Government website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/covid-19-financial-supports#BCEBW>



ICBC

Customers on a monthly payment plan who are facing financial challenges due to COVID-19 may defer their payment for up to 90 days with no penalty. Read more by visiting the BC Government website:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/covid-19-financial-supports#BCEBW>



BC Student Loans

Starting March 30, 2020, B.C. student loan payments are automatically frozen for six months.

CULTIVATING MENTAL WELLNESS DURING COVID-19



Managing COVID-19 Stress

Tips on looking after yourself



Make time to unwind.

Use a few minutes of your day to do something you enjoy.

Source: WHO



Take a break from the news.

Information overload can be upsetting. Make an effort to switch off your screens once in a while.

Source: WHO



Take care of your body.

Meditate, eat well-balanced meals, take deep breaths. Aside from staying safe, stay healthy.

Source: WHO



Connect with others.

Talk to people you trust about your concerns and how you're feeling.

Source: WHO



The situation may be overwhelming, but coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Source: WHO

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA: SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUALS



Special Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit Payment

A one-time special payment through the Goods and Services Tax credit for low- and modest-income families will be paid on April 9th. There is no need to apply for this payment. If you are eligible, you will get it automatically. If you were previously not entitled to the GST/HST credit, but have filed your 2018 tax return, you may also get the one-time credit amount based on your family net income.



Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) is a benefit to support Canadians who have lost income because of COVID-19. The CERB will provide a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to eligible workers who have lost their income due to COVID-19.



Increasing the Canada Child Benefit (CBB)

Up to an extra \$300 per child through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for the 2019-20 benefit year. This benefit will be delivered as part of the scheduled CCB payment in May. Those who already receive the CCB do not need to re-apply.



Support for Income/Disability Assistance

If you are not receiving federal Employment Insurance (EI) or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and are on: Income Assistance, Disability Assistance, Comforts Allowance, or the BC Senior's Supplement, you will automatically receive a \$300 supplement on your cheques issued in April, May, and June.

For more information on these, and other supports, being offered by the Government of Canada, visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

BC PARKS CLOSURE AND NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL

We recognize the importance of being on the land as Métis people, and having BC Parks closing the entire BC Parks system is unsettling but is deemed necessary for all of us to stay safe from COVID-19.

The closure includes all parks, protected areas, conservancies, recreation areas, and ecological reserves. This temporary measure means public and vehicle access is prohibited until further notice. All trails, roads, day-use areas, beaches, lakes, boat launches, and backcountry areas are closed to the public.

With the desire of the public to get outdoors, many parks have already experienced peak season levels of use that have resulted in overwhelmed parking lots, trails and trailheads, making physical distancing difficult, if not impossible in some locations.

Park closures will be enforced through regular monitoring and patrols and anyone found in a closed park will be evicted and could face a \$115 fine.

For more information, visit <http://bcparks.ca/covid-19/>

As we start the long weekend, it is tempting to want to travel to visit family and other beautiful parts of the province. It's important to remember that there is still an advisory against all non-essential travel, including to other jurisdictions in BC and out of province.

By traveling to smaller Communities we may endanger those residents and put stress on the smaller medical facilities who are not equipped for a larger population and/or a spike in cases for regular residents. Please stay home.

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY CHILD CARE FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS



To support parents who are essential service workers during the response to COVID-19, the provincial government is launching a new process that will match parents, who are working on the front lines of B.C.'s COVID-19 response and have children up to five years of age, with child care in their communities.



Essential workers can fill out a new “parent” form to identify their need for urgent child care. Forms can be accessed by calling 1 888 338-6622 and selecting Option 4, or online: www.gov.bc.ca/essential-service-child-care



Child care spaces will be prioritized for children whose parents work in public health and health services, social services, law enforcement, first responders, and emergency response sectors. Additional spaces will then be given to families working in other crucial roles, defined as essential service workers.



If essential service workers who have school-aged children need before-, during- and after-hours care for their children, they are asked to contact their school district directly

For more information on the Temporary Emergency Child Care for Essential Workers process, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-response-covid-19/child-care-response-covid-19-parent/child-care-response-covid-19-parent-form>

HAND SANITIZER

MNBC's first shipments of hand sanitizer are now beginning to be received and shipped to Chartered Communities. If you are a Citizen, please connect with your Chartered Community after the long weekend shipments will hopefully have arrived.

Please note the Paralell 49 hand sanitizer in the can is quite thin.

Be sure to transfer the hand sanitizer to a new water sealable container before use.

Please do not dilute this product - consider using a clean spray bottle and use as a surface disinfectant as well as a hand sanitizer.

Please take care to avoid smoking, static discharge, and heat sources (open fires, ovens, etc.) when opening and transporting these shipments. The products are safe to use on your skin, but please consider using gloves when pouring or transferring liquid from the pails and cans to other containers as large quantities can cause burns and irritation.

Safety Data Sheets are arriving by mail along with pumps for dispensing the 5 gallon / 18L pails of hand sanitizer next week.



HAND SANITIZER

How to use Hand Sanitizer



Hand sanitizer can be used if you don't have access to soap and water



Hand sanitizer should not be used if your hands are visibly soiled



1) Remove jewelry and apply a quarter sized amount to your non dominant palm



2) Rub all over your hands backs of hands and also between your fingers. Pay particular attention to your fingertips and thumbs. Continue for 15-20 sec until your hands are completely dry and replace jewelry

Carry product in small pocket sized bottles, like a cleaned small bottle from a hotel or small spray bottle. to use when washing your hands is not possible

Please note: Hand sanitizer should contain a minimum of 60% alcohol to be effective in killing bacteria and viruses



**MÉTIS NATION
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

SPOTTED ACROSS BC: MESSAGES OF THANKS



To our healthcare workers, first responders, frontline staff, and essential service workers - we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

We are so deeply grateful for all that you do.

Though we are apart for now,
we stand with you always.

