

MÉTIS NATION BRITISH COLUMBIA HEALTH AND WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 45 | UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION AS OF
FEBRUARY 5, 2021



“We know the COVID-19 variants make things more challenging as the virus is more likely to spread quickly, which is why we all need to continue to make safe choices.” -

Dr. Bonnie Henry

If you or someone you know is isolated or in need of assistance, please email health@mnbc.ca. MNBC's Ministry of Health team will help connect you to available Community supports.

MNBC will be updating our webpage as new information becomes available. Follow our COVID-19 page at www.mnbc.ca

Please also see the last page, with links to previous issues of our COVID-19 newsletter for more information on hand washing, physical distancing, and more.

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COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

“Until the COVID-19 vaccines are available for all of us, let’s choose less and choose small. This is the path to get to the brighter days ahead.”



"To date, 142,146 people have received a COVID-19 vaccine, with 6,417 of which are second doses within British Columbia. Immunization data is available on the COVID-19 dashboard at www.bccdc.ca

"Our B.C. COVID-19 pandemic response is a careful balance — protecting our communities and also keeping open as much as we can that is safe to do so.

"It is about being able to do some things at a moderate level, instead of completely closing most places and activities, as we have seen elsewhere. A walk with a friend allows you to see each other, to have that important connection and still remain safe. This is the modified approach we want to continue.

"To make this work for everyone, we need businesses to have robust safety plans and closely follow all of the public health orders. We also need everyone to do the same: to follow the orders we have in place and use our layers of protection, whether we are out at a restaurant, work, school or home.

[More on Dr. Bonnie's statement here](#)

Enhanced safety measures for K-12 schools

All middle and secondary students and K-12 staff will now be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are with their learning groups. The only exceptions are when:

- sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom;
- there is a barrier in place; or
- they are eating or drinking.

Mask exemptions remain in place for students and staff who cannot wear a mask for health or behavioural reasons.

Even when wearing a mask, staff and students will still be required to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning group.

Elementary school students are not required to wear masks and it remains a family decision.

If a student or staff member develops symptoms while at school, they must wear a mask while they are preparing to go home. [Review COVID-19 mask use information from the BCCDC.](#)



Ask a Medical Health Officer!

In partnership with Interior Health, MNBC has connected with Dr. Carol Fenton, Medical Health Officer to ask common questions

Question: Do people who are pregnant, trying to get pregnant, or breastfeeding have safety concerns with the vaccine?

Answer: The [Canadian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology \(SOGC\)](#), the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) and public health experts in B.C. all advise that pregnant and breastfeeding women can be offered the vaccine. If you have questions, and you are pregnant, planning to become pregnant or are breastfeeding, speak to your health care provider about COVID-19 vaccines.



Interior Health
Every person. matters.



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Ask a Medical Health Officer!

Question: Is it safe for me to get a COVID-19 vaccine if I am immunocompromised from treatment or illness? What if I have an autoimmune disease?

Answer: Nearly everyone will be able to safely receive the vaccine, although a very small number of people may need to avoid vaccination due to severe allergies to parts of the vaccine. Vaccine

manufacturers identify a number of precautions because these populations were not included in the original vaccine trials. In the context of the ongoing risk of COVID-19, most individuals can be offered vaccination:

- Weakened immune systems. COVID-19 vaccines are not live vaccines, and there are no significant concerns about safety for those with weakened immune systems. It is possible that the vaccine may not work as expected in people who have a weakened immune system. If you have questions and have a weakened immune system, speak to your healthcare provider about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Autoimmune diseases. If you have questions and have an autoimmune disease, speak to your healthcare provider or medical specialist

Have questions about the COVID vaccines?
Please e-mail us your questions to be sent off to the Medical Health Officer from Interior Health to be featured on future newsletters!

e-mail us at: health@mnbca.ca



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Every person matters



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Over a million people worldwide have now had vaccines and there have been very few serious side effects.



"I am happy I took the vaccine. I want all my people to be vaccinated."

Annabelle Metatawabin, 86 years old, and is the first long-term care patient from Peawanuck First Nation to get vaccinated.

Photo and quote courtesy of:
www.ontario.ca/covid-19/vaccine

After Vaccination

Side effects

Most people have no side effects at all. Like other vaccines the COVID-19 vaccine can cause mild side effects such as: Pain, redness or swelling where the needle was given, mild fever, tiredness, and muscle or joint aches. These mild side effects go away on their own without treatment.

Until everyone is vaccinated, public health measures will continue to be necessary to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and save lives.

These recommendations include:

- Wash your hands,
- Stay home when sick,
- Maintain physical distancing,
- Wear a face mask as appropriate, and
- Keep using good cough and surface hygiene.

Together...

**Let's stop
COVID-19
one arm at a
time!**

Get vaccinated to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.

Talk to a health care provider in your community if you have questions about the vaccine.



Canadian

Vaccine Safety

Q: I know these vaccines were developed quickly and that concerns me – were shortcuts taken?

No. Because it is a health emergency and because doctors and scientists worked together all over the world, the vaccines took less time to develop.

Tens of thousands of people volunteered to be in the studies for the vaccine. Health Canada reviewed and approved the vaccines according to high standards and no shortcuts were taken.

The vaccines that have been approved are very effective at preventing people from catching COVID-19 and getting sick. Vaccines for other infections like meningitis and polio have prevented millions of people from getting these diseases and have saved lives.



Mardean Hill, Iroquois Lodge, Six Nations of the Grand River, receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Misinformation and Facts

MISINFORMATION: The vaccine is being tested on Indigenous Peoples.

FACT: No, the vaccine is not being tested on Indigenous Peoples. Large studies have already been done with the approved vaccines in Canada, in tens of thousands of people.

Indigenous persons are a priority because they are more likely than other Canadians to have health problems and are at risk of being very sick with COVID-19.

MISINFORMATION: People have had serious allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine.

FACT: No. This has happened very rarely. It is important to talk to your nurse or doctor if you have ever had serious allergic reactions.

MISINFORMATION: I can get COVID-19 from the vaccine.

FACT: No. You cannot get COVID-19 infection from the vaccine. The vaccines do not contain whole live viruses so they cannot cause the infection.

Getting the Vaccine

Vaccines work by training your immune system to recognize a virus and stop it from making you sick. After you get the vaccine, if you are exposed to the virus, your body is ready to respond more quickly than if you hadn't had the vaccine.

Pfizer and Moderna, both require two doses 3-4 weeks apart.

REGISTER FOR COVID-19 VACCINATIONS FOR MÉTIS ELDERS/SENIORS

MNBC's Ministry of Health wants to ensure that our Métis Elders/Seniors have access to the COVID-19 vaccination in Phase 2 of the Immunization plan, as a prioritized population by the Provincial Health Officer. The COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved by Health Canada are safe, effective, and will save lives. To date, two vaccines have been approved for use by Health Canada (Pfizer and Moderna). This will allow us to contact you or your loved one when the vaccine roll out occurs for Elders and Seniors who are 65+.

Please visit www.mnbc.ca to be added to our pre-registration contact list for Elders and Seniors vaccination roll-out.

*Please note - If you have already registered by phone or e-mail with the MNBC Ministry of Health, you **will not** need to sign up for this pre-registration.

CONTACT US

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact:

Email: health@mnbc.ca

Phone: 1-800-940-1150 Ext.8226

The Ministry of Health will reach out to all Elders and Seniors on this contact list once a roll-out plan has been finalized.



WORLD *Cancer* DAY

FEBRUARY 4TH 2021

Observed yesterday, on February 4th 2021, was World Cancer Day.

There will be an estimated 225,800 new cancer cases and 83,300 who will pass on from the disease in Canada, in 2020 (CCS). We know a new cancer diagnosis can be an emotional time for Métis people and their families. We at MNBC are committed to ensuring every Métis person is supported during their cancer journey.

This year, in honour of World Cancer Day, the Ministry of Health announced two new exciting resources which can be found on MNBC's news and events page.

We are hopeful these resources will bring awareness to the importance of Cancer screening, and some of the preventative measures currently available in B.C.

[Click here to read more on Cancer Statistics as a Glance](#)

WORLD Cancer

DAY

FEBRUARY 4TH 2021

ELIMINATING CERVICAL CANCER IN CANADA

This year, in honour of World Cancer Day, we are announcing MNBC's very own designed cervical cancer kits. These kits include cervical cancer infographics with useful information, reusable face wipes, pens and other cool MNBC swag. We are hopeful this project will bring awareness to the importance of cervical cancer screening and the preventative measures currently available in Canada.

Please note: kits are limited and available on a first come- first served basis.

If you have any questions about the project or to receive one of our cervical cancer kits, please email us
health@mnbc.ca.



COVID-19 MASK REQUEST



Log in or sign up <http://www.mnbc.ca/portal/login/> to request for a reusable fabric mask today!

Thank you



To our healthcare workers, first responders, frontline staff, and essential service workers - as always, 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.