

Navigating COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions by Health Professionals

Information to Share with community members

1. [Where can I find the most up-to-date information to share with community members about COVID-19?](#)
2. [What resources are available for community members who have ongoing care needs following of persistent symptoms of COVID-19?](#)
3. [What can I do to ease concerns of community members?](#)

Resources for Community Health Nurses

4. [Where can I find the most up-to-date clinical resources for Health Professionals regarding COVID-19?](#)
5. [Where can I find information on COVID-19 variants of concern \(VOCs\)?](#)
6. [What resources are available to support Community's Communicable Disease Emergency Response Plan?](#)
7. [Who should I contact if I have questions about communicable disease management in First Nations Communities?](#)
8. [Where can I find epidemiological data on COVID-19?](#)

Infection Prevention and Control

9. [What are the Infection Prevention and Control \(IPC\) measures and Personal Protective equipment requirements to mitigate the spread of COVID-19?](#)
10. [What are the requirements for N-95 fit testing and where can I be fit tested?](#)
11. [How can I request more PPE and testing supplies for my Community?](#)

CD Management in Community

12. [What is the responsibility of the Regional Health Authority CD unit/MHO and what is my responsibility as a CHN related to COVID-19 case and contact follow up?](#)
13. [What messaging should I give to community members if they are symptomatic?](#)
14. [What are the current recommendations for self-isolation and self-monitoring in First Nations Communities?](#)
15. [Where can I find information about COVID-19 treatments?](#)
16. [How can CHN's support community members who are living with or caring for someone who has COVID-19?](#)

Post-COVID-19

17. [What is Post-COVID-19?](#)
18. [What can I do if a community member may have Post-COVID-19?](#)
19. [What resources are available for community members with Post-COVID-19?](#)

Information to Share with community members

1. Where can I find the most up-to-date information to share with community members about COVID-19?

The following websites are updated frequently:

- **FNHA:** <https://www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/communicable-disease-control/coronavirus>
- **BCCDC:** <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>
 - **BC Self-Assessment tool:** <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- **BC Government's response to COVID-19:** <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/response>
- **Health Canada:** <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

2. What resources are available for community members who have ongoing care needs following of persistent symptoms of COVID-19?

PHSA's Post COVID-19 Interdisciplinary Clinical Care Network is available to support the best possible outcomes for people who have experienced serious cases of COVID-19. Individuals must be referred to a clinic by their primary care provider and further information can be found [here](#). The network has also developed [education tools and resources](#) available to individuals and healthcare workers, independent of accessing the clinics.

3. What can I do to ease concerns of community members?

Continue to share key messages of what community members can do to prevent the spread of infection for themselves, their family and their community.

A pandemic can create overwhelming concern and anxiety. It can also bring up historical trauma and fear related to the spread of communicable diseases in First Nations Communities. Nurses working in First Nations Communities are well equipped to answer questions from community members with a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach.

The KUU-US Crisis Line Society provides a First Nations and Indigenous specific crisis line available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free from anywhere in British Columbia. The KUU-US Crisis Line can be reached toll-free at 1-800-588-8717. Alternatively, individuals can call direct into the Youth Line at 250-723-2040 or the Adult Line at 250-723-4050. Please also see: <https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-Mental-Health-and-Cultural-Supports.pdf>

Resources for Community Health Nurses

4. Where can I find the most up-to-date clinical resources for Health Professionals regarding COVID-19?

[BCCDC clinical resources](#) and [FNHA COVID-19 for Health Professionals](#)

5. Where can I find information on COVID-19 variants of concern (VOCs)?

General information about COVID-19 variants can be found on the BCCDC website [here](#) and the FNHA website [here](#). The BCCDC is continuously monitoring for variants of interest (VOIs) and variants of concern (VOCs). There are numerous VOIs, and they may not necessarily become VOCs. Once a VOI becomes a VOC, it will be added to BCCDC's VOC reporting.

Weekly reports of VOCs put out by BCCDC can be found [here](#).

6. What resources are available to support Community's Communicable Disease Emergency Response Plan?

The CD Management team as well as your Regional Communicable Disease Emergency Nurse Advisor are available to support Community's Communicable Disease Emergency Response Planning (Formerly known as Pandemic Influenza Plan) and testing (i.e. tabletop exercise). They can also provide information on available funding. For more information please see the [CDE Response Plan template and CDE Response Guide](#).

7. Who should I contact if I have questions about communicable disease management in First Nations Communities?

There are many resources available to support you, please see contact list below:

- Please contact your FNHA Regional team, such as your Community Health Practice Consultants
- For Nurses who have clinical questions please email cdmgmt@fnha.ca
 - For specific case and contact follow up please contact your Regional Health Authority CD Unit. Contact information can be found [here](#)
- For information about ordering PPE for your communities, please email covid19needs@fnha.ca
- For all other non-clinical COVID-19 inquiries, please email covid19@fnha.ca
- For all Infection Prevention and Control inquiries, please email IPC@fnha.ca
- For all Vaccine related questions, please email immunize@fnha.ca

8. Where can I find epidemiological data on COVID-19?

Beginning October 13, 2022, interactive data products on COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases including the COVID-19 Dashboard, Situation Report, Weekly Report and Epi App are available at the BCCDC [Respiratory Diseases](#) page.

The BCCDC COVID-19 Data page has archived COVID-19 data reports and updated PDF reports will continue to be available on this page [here](#).

The FNHA also compiles COVID-19 data particular to First Nations in BC – this report is called the Community Situation Report. This information can be found [here](#) by scrolling to the bottom of the page

Infection Prevention and Control

9. What are the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures and Personal Protective equipment requirements to mitigate the spread of COVID-19?

It is recommended that health care professionals diligently continue with current routine IPC measures, including [Point of Care Risk Assessments](#) and additional precautions (i.e. Having all clients and visitors in a health care facility wear a mask, frequent hand washing, contact and droplet precautions, and equipment and environmental cleaning and disinfection.)

Please see additional resources on the [BCCDC Infection Control](#) page and on the [FNHA COVID-19 for Health Professionals](#) page.

At this time, it is required to wear a mask in all health care settings (refer [here](#) for more information).

Personal Protective Equipment (including indications for N95 respirators) for COVID-19 is outlined in [An Interim Guide to Using Personal Protective Equipment](#). Although PPE supplies in BC are currently in a better state, we must all continue to be good stewards of our inventory to ensure appropriate PPE use as well as implement conservation measures when appropriate.

10. What are the requirements for N-95 fit testing and where can I be fit tested?

In British Columbia, it is an Occupational Health requirement that fit-testing for N-95 respirators be completed annually for health care staff.

If there is no one trained and designated as a fit tester in your health care facility, an option for Communities may be to contact the local Public Health Unit or an established contact within the Regional Health Authority that may be able to visit you and provide fit testing for health care staff. Occasionally, there are Train the Trainer workshops hosted by educators in the Regional Health Authority that can be accessed. FNHA Occupational Health Safety and Wellness Team is able to lend fit testing kits to communities once there is a trainer able to use the kit. They also have a list of private businesses who conduct respirator fit testing. They may be reached at safetymatters@fnha.ca

For N95 respirator use requirements please also see [An Interim Guide to Using Personal Protective Equipment](#).

11. How can I request more PPE and testing supplies for my Community?

Communities are encouraged to continue ordering supplies through regular channels as much as possible (in addition to supplies being made available through our provincial and federal partners.)

Please refer to the FNHA [COVID-19: Information for Community Leaders](#) webpage to access the BC First Nations Community Guide for Additional Supports Needed. The *ANNEX A: Personal Protective Equipment and COVID Testing Supplies Request Process and Form* is also available on this webpage.

To continue to support stewardship of PPE supplies, the CD Management team will verify the indication for N-95 masks being ordered.

CD Management in Community

12. What is the responsibility of the Regional Health Authority CD unit/MHO and what is my responsibility as a CHN related to COVID-19 case and contact follow up?

The statutory responsibility for CD follow-up lies with the Regional Health Authority (RHA) - as it flows from the Public Health Act to the regional Medical Health Officers. The [COVID-19](#)

[Adapted Regional Health Authority - First Nations Health Authority Communicable Disease Protocol](#) provides information on the roles, responsibilities and activities of the First Nations Health Authority and the Regional Health Authorities to guide the collaborative follow-up.

CHNs may also be involved in client teaching, specimen collection, and community based testing. Please reach out to your FNHA Regional team (such as your Community Health Practice Consultant) or the CD Management team if you have any questions.

13. What messaging should I give to community members if they are symptomatic?

It is no longer a requirement to self-isolate. However, it is still important for people with symptoms to stay home as much as possible to reduce any potential spread of illness until their symptoms have improved, and they are able to participate in their usual activities. For more information on the changes to Self-Isolation and Self-Monitoring, visit the [BCCDC Website](#).

Certain individuals are at higher risk of severe COVID-19 illness and may be eligible for treatment. See the question [“Where can I find information regarding COVID-19 Treatments”](#) in this document for where to find more information on COVID-19 treatments and eligibility.

14. Where can I find information regarding COVID-19 treatments?

There are some treatments available for people who tested positive for COVID-19 and who are at higher risk of serious illness and needing hospitalization. It is important that community members know if they are eligible for treatment, are linked to a Primary Care Provider and are able to access treatment in a timely manner. Refer to the FNHA website [here](#) for more information about COVID-19 treatments. A document for community members has been developed and is posted [here](#).

Important information about COVID-19 treatments can be found on the Province of BC's website [here](#).

Post-COVID-19

15. What is Post-COVID-19?

“Post COVID-19” is an umbrella term for any symptoms that remain after you are initially sick with COVID-19. Some people who have had COVID-19 experience “long-COVID”, or a range of symptoms that last months or years after the initial illness and that can have a significant impact on quality of life and function.

Post COVID-19 has also been defined as a long persistent group of symptoms following COVID-19, typically lasting longer than 3 months.

16. What can I do if a community member may have Post-COVID-19?

Refer them to their doctor or Primary Care Provider (PCP)

It is important to connect your client to their family doctor or PCP if they have had COVID-19 and have lingering symptoms.

After ruling out other possible causes, their primary care provider (e.g. family doctor or nurse practitioner) can refer them to the Post-COVID-19 Interdisciplinary Care Network (the Network), which is a group of BC clinics that support people who are struggling to recover from COVID-19. There are currently 4 clinics located in BC. The clinics offer in person and virtual appointments.

To be referred, a person must be experiencing symptoms that limit daily activities and that have been affecting them for at least three (3) months following a presumed or confirmed COVID-19 illness. **Note:** Effective March 1, 2022, people **do not** need a positive COVID test for referral.

Referrals are done by completing the [referral form](#). Their primary care provider should ideally offer additional testing or consults depending on the lingering symptoms to rule out any other known causes. The referral form has more details on what tests should be done prior to a referral to the Post-COVID-19 Clinic Network.

Refer them to information about Post-COVID-19

For up to date, detailed information about Post-COVID-19 recovery please refer to the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) website:

[Living with Persistent Post-COVID-19 Symptoms \(phsa.ca\)](https://www.phsa.ca/living-with-persistent-post-covid-19-symptoms)

Here you will find important information regarding client self-care, clinical care, information videos and other additional care information.

FNHA has developed a Frequently Asked Questions fact sheet for community members titled "Living with Post-COVID-19" and it can be found [here](#).

17. What resources are available for community members with Post-COVID-19?

FNHA Resources and Support for Post –COVID-19

If your client does not have a family doctor or a primary care provider, please connect them with the FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day

If community members do not have access to a doctor, or have lost access because of the COVID-19 pandemic, call **1.855.344.3800** to book an appointment with the Virtual Doctor of the Day in your region. You can find out more information about Virtual Doctor of the Day on the FNHA website: [First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day](#)

Medical Transportation

Medical transportation (MT) benefits, including assistance with the cost of meals, accommodation and transportation to help you travel to a medical appointment - like a Post-COVID-19 Interdisciplinary Care Clinic, for example – are available. For more information on MT benefits, please visit www.fnha.ca/benefits/medical-transportation

Mental Health, Wellness and Cultural Support.

Living with an ongoing health condition is challenging and can result in feelings of fatigue, worry and disconnection among others. [Mental Health and Wellness Supports](#) to keep us well spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally, are available through telephone support, and by both in-person and virtual appointments.