

COVID-19 Pandemic - Update - Community and Workplace Measures

March 18, 2020

What is happening in BC and why we say **PLEASE AVOID HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES**:

The BC Centre for Disease Control Case Count and Press Statement for March 17, 2020 states that:

186 confirmed cases in British Columbia as of 3 pm March 17, 2020

- Five recovered
- Seven deaths

Confirmed cases by region:

- 47 Fraser Health
- 7 Interior Health
- 12 Island Health
- 4 Northern Health
- 116 Vancouver Coastal Health

6,326 individuals tested as of March 13, 2020

For more information on this:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/case-counts-press-statements>

HIGH RISK AREAS During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Eating establishments - restaurants, food courts, cafes, coffeehouses, bars, pubs, breweries
- Entertainment buildings - theatres, recreation centers, indoor sports facilities, shopping malls
- Public fitness centers - indoor exercise facilities, studios, spas
- All means of public transportation

Protect yourself and your family by avoiding people who participate in high risk activities.

Kitsumkalum's Health Director and I sat in on a teleconference yesterday afternoon with Northern Health which provided some clarity around the BC Government's response and recommendations to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently the Provincial Medical Health Office is not recommending closure of day care centres or pre-schools and is instead limiting closures to K-12 classes. This is due to the smaller group sizes, and therefore lower risk of transmissions, and is also intended to allow businesses to continue functioning by

allowing their staff to attend work if appropriate.

As of yet there is no specific direction regarding closing all workplaces but Northern Health, in conjunction with the BC Government, has provided sensible recommendations to facilitate businesses in staying open while protecting employee and public safety.

- wash your hands frequently and vigorously
- avoid touching your face
- sneeze and cough into your elbow, then wash your hands some more
- ***stay at home if you are sick*** You can call the BC Health Virtual Clinic at **1-844-645-7811** or BC Nurse Line at **811** if you are unwell and think you have been exposed to COVID-19.
- unless you are experiencing an acute emergency, refrain from going to the hospital until you have spoken to a health professional.
- if you feel sick and think you need hospitalization call the Virtual Clinic or 811, if you are experiencing an emergency call 911
- use social distancing to minimize physical contact and close proximity interactions (hold meetings via phone/skype, avoid shaking hands etc.)
- help to protect Elders by minimizing personal contact and getting them essential supplies to allow them to stay in their homes.
- save up your hugs for your family members for future use. I recognize how emotionally hard it is to not show physical affection for your loved ones, but by employing careful measures now we will allow for years of future opportunities to do so.
- check in with friends and family via phone where possible, if visiting in person avoid contact.
- clean all surfaces and touch points in your home or office with soap and water or a 10% bleach solution of 1 part bleach to 9 parts water.
- although children aren't at particularly high risk of complications from COVID-19, they can transmit the virus to elderly and immunocompromised community members. If at all possible minimize their contact and movement within the community, and teach them excellent hand washing technique.
- currently closing day cares and pre-schools is not being recommended; however, it may be prudent to start thinking about what you can do if they do close, such as have older children or family care for them while you are at work
- if you are in a customer-facing position, work with your manager to implement measures which limit customer time in the facility and interaction; such as encouraging use of debit/credit cards (tap is ideal), perhaps consider assisting customers to locate items while they wait near the store entrance and discourage longer stays by removing seating and tables if appropriate.
- again, clean all work and touch surfaces often
- IF you can effectively perform the duties of your work remotely then speak with your manager about whether that would be an option.

At this time health officials are not recommending shutting down all workplaces and instead are asking all citizens to be diligent with hygiene and adopt social distancing practices.

Kitsumkalum Health is currently closed to the public, but still in operation. If you have questions or concerns or are experiencing illness you can call them at **250-635-6172** or via the Health Director's cell number - **250-641-1553** or email - **director.health@kitsumkalum.com**

Kitsumkalum Economic Development Office is also closed to the public, but still in operation.

All other offices and business in Kitsumkalum are at regular hours and implementing the measures mentioned above for the safety of staff and public.

The BC and Federal government have announced financial assistance for those affected by the pandemic including making EI more accessible. As these measures are made available we will compile a list of available resources to share.

In order to minimize the already significant economic, and potential personal financial, implications it is important that we continue to conduct business where appropriate and possible, but that we adopt some new strategies to ensure our collective safety.

Any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me and I'll work with Charlene and our excellent Health Centre Staff, as well as provincial resources, to provide sound advice.

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Kitsumkalum Health: 250-635-6172; director.health@kitsumkalum.com

Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line: 1-844-645-7811

HealthLink BC: 8-1-1; **Hard of hearing/deaf:** 7-1-1

First Nations Health Authority Information:

<https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/information-on-novel-coronavirus>