

Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Key Facts

We are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

A sudden increase in people becoming infected with COVID-19 may impact the capacity of our health system to provide care to everyone who needs it.

By slowing the spread of the virus, our most vulnerable will be able to access care when and where they need it.

80% of people who are infected will have mild symptoms that will not require care outside of the home.

Around 1 out of 6 people who get COVID-19 may become seriously ill and develop difficulty breathing.

Older people, and those with preexisting medical conditions such as high blood pressure, heart problems or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SLOW TRANSMISSION

Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Monitor yourself.

If you have a fever, a new cough or difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1 for guidance.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO TO SLOW TRANSMISSION

Support hand washing, social distancing, and adopt flexible sick-leave policies to allow people who are sick to stay home.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces using routine practices and consider cleaning and disinfecting twice a day if possible.

Questions and Answers on COVID-19 and Childcare Settings

What is COVID-19 and how is it spread?

- COVID-19 is a respiratory infection that is spread by droplets. These are small particles that are dispersed one to two metres when people cough or sneeze. They can land on environmental surfaces and people who touch those surfaces and contaminate their eyes, nose or mouth can become infected. This is very similar to how influenza is spread.

Who is at high risk from COVID-19?

- COVID-19 can cause quite severe disease in certain populations – particularly the frail elderly and in adults with chronic, underlying health conditions.
- Our goal is to protect vulnerable populations. The first cases were returning travellers and some of their household contacts, who were identified and isolated. Since then there has been spread within communities.

What will children experience if they get COVID-19?

- For most of the population, including children and healthy adults, disease symptoms are relatively mild. For these people, the symptoms are similar to a common cold.
- If we look at cases around the world involving young children, this disease does not seem to cause as severe symptoms for children. Some children do not have any symptoms at all. It is different than Influenza which can



cause quite severe disease in young children and results in hospitalizations and some deaths across North America every year.

- To date there is no evidence of transmission or reported outbreaks within daycares or schools in B.C. There have been no young children who have died of COVID-19 that we are aware of to date anywhere in the world.

Are children who don't have symptoms contagious?

- People who don't show symptoms do not pose a risk to others. The evidence to date is the transmission is only after symptoms develop.

What does "bending" or "flattening the curve" mean?

- In Canada, we are working hard to ensure case numbers don't overwhelm our acute care hospitals. We call this "flattening or bending the curve." We are taking action to slow the transmission of the virus within our population.

What actions are being taken to reduce the rate of transmission?

- BC has taken several actions to limit gatherings and slow community spread. Travel restrictions are in place, school classes have been suspended and restaurants, nightclubs and bars have been closed. We will continue to monitor the impact of the actions and adjust as necessary.
- There are slightly different measures taken depending on the community. This can create questions about which actions are chosen, but the broader purpose is the same. It is about acting at a population level to do what we can to create physical distance, within reason, to reduce spread.
- We need to be careful that the measures we take to protect people from COVID-19 don't end up causing harm. We must be careful that people aren't isolated and that other vulnerable members of our society continue to receive the services they depend on.

School classes have been suspended. Why aren't daycares closing?

- School classes have been suspended to limit the spread of COVID-19 across communities. The fewer people out in public, the less chance of spread. Parents who can, should care for their children at home.
- It is important though, that necessary services to the public continue. Daycares are providing a very important service. Essential service workers with children who require care need to be able to go to work.
- Young children who do attend daycare and staff who are healthy adults, are not at high risk of serious disease from COVID-19. To date there is no evidence of transmission or reported outbreaks within daycares or schools in B.C.

Should children with allergies stay home? How can educators know if it is allergies or something contagious?

- Children with allergies don't need to stay home. If a child has a new onset of a runny nose, it is important to check if they also have a fever and/or cough.
- There are several viruses and bacteria circulating in the population, in fact influenza and colds are much more common than COVID-19. Parents of children with cold or influenza-like symptoms should keep their children home for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptom.



What about keeping childcare staff safe?

- Staff may want to discuss concerns about attending work with their physician. Generally, people who have doctor approval to work in a child care facility would also be safe to work, even when COVID-19 is being transmitted.

Why are some municipalities closing parks and playgrounds?

- Medical Health Officers do not support shutting down playgrounds. We should all practise physical distancing where possible, but we can't reduce all interactions because that would be harmful.
- There is no evidence that there is a health risk for children playing outside.

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