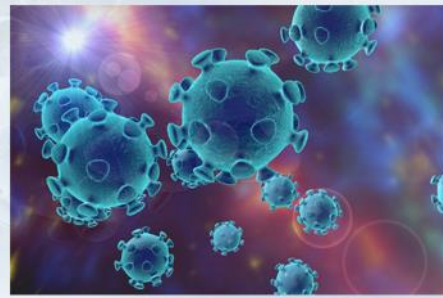


COVID-19 Update

Employee and Physician Information



Update from CEO and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) January 4, 2022

General update

- In today's provincial public advisory, there were 493 individuals diagnosed with COVID-19, 33 in the Western Health region, 267 in the Eastern Health region, 57 in the Central Health region and 125 in the Labrador-Grenfell Health region (read more [here](#)). There are also 11 individuals whose tests were completed at a private lab outside an RHA. See pandemic hub [here](#).
- We recognize this increase in cases has had a tremendous impact on you. Many of you have been impacted personally by COVID and others did not get the planned vacation that you anticipated. We are very thankful for all your efforts to keep residents of our region safe and healthy.
- To assist with reducing the strain on our health care system, yesterday the Chief Medical Officer of Health announced the entire province will move into Alert Level 4. There are several measures implemented in Alert Level 4 including keeping informal gatherings to your household's tight 10, consistent contacts (read more [here](#)).

Operations Update

- All travelers, including employees, returning to NL after 3:00 p.m. on Dec 21, 2021, are required to isolate for 5 days. As well, in accordance with updated guidance for COVID-19 testing, individuals in higher risk situations, including those who work in health care who are high-risk contacts continue to be required to isolate for seven days and be tested. Given the staffing challenges in health care, there are exemptions for essential health care workers who are critical for service provision. If any staff member or physician has been directed to isolate based on employee health/public health guidance, and their manager believes they are an essential health care worker, they will notify Human Resources to discuss the individual situation and exemption process. See guidelines [here](#).
- For the general public, individuals who are identified as close contacts of an individual with COVID who have symptoms (or develop symptoms) no longer require testing, as it is probable they also have COVID. Testing is also no longer required for partially/unvaccinated contacts. Testing is still required for close contacts of COVID positive individuals for individuals who work in health care, or in other higher risk situations such as first responders, individuals who work with vulnerable populations, or live in congregate settings.

- Booster doses for COVID are now available for anyone older than 18 who had their last dose at least 22 weeks ago. To make your booster dose appointment, please click [here](#)
- 81.4% of the eligible population (aged 5 +) of the Western Health region have received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, and 87.2% have had at least one dose (as of January 3). These statistics now include 5-11 year olds as part of the eligible population. So far 51.6 % of 5-11 year olds in the Western region have had their first dose. In addition, 14.9 % of all eligible individuals have received a booster dose
- We will be significantly increasing access to the Booster for the month of January, including dedicated appointments available for pediatric vaccines and for individuals aged 70+. A schedule for regional availability of appointments will be available ([here](#)) on or before Monday, January 10th. In the meantime, please continue to check here for additional appointments that will be added in select vaccine locations as available
- Due to the increase in numbers of individuals with COVID-19, we are reminding you that:
 - Patients/residents/clients, if tolerated, should be wearing a mask while interacting with health care workers.
 - Staff need to assess patients/residents each shift for any signs and symptoms. Patients/residents should be swabbed if there is any change in condition.
- All health care workers who provide direct care to patients/residents/clients with confirmed COVID-19 or symptoms and/or exposure to a confirmed case should wear:
 - Respirator (N95 or equivalent)
 - Eye protection (e.g., goggles or face shield)
 - Gowns
 - Gloves
 - The point of care risk assessment should be completed for each encounter (see [here](#)).
- Further visitor restrictions have been implemented where patients/residents in some cases may have one support person (read more [here](#)).

Human Resources Update

- Common spaces including lunchrooms and lounges are high risk areas for COVID-19 exposures. We are asking all staff and physicians to be extra vigilant when using these spaces. Physical distancing must be maintained at all times in these areas. Only remove your mask to eat, once you have finished eating, please don your mask again for the remainder of your break. Staggered breaks are recommended, and the use of alternate spaces such as conference rooms is encouraged where possible to maintain physical distancing.
- Western Health has arranged for safe accommodations (hospital housing, hotels, and motels) to provide safe accommodations for staff who are required to self-isolate because they have acquired COVID, had a workplace exposure, or are not able to isolate away from others in their household. Staff members and physicians who have concerns

about isolating for themselves or family members should contact their manager for an accommodation request.

- We are reminding staff to complete the [COVID-19 Staff Self-Assessment Tool](#) before attending work each day/shift and again midway through your shift if you work in long term care. It is important that this tool is completed even if you feel that your symptoms are minor.
- Whether you provide direct or indirect support, as health care workers we all know how the current outbreak is impacting our work and family life. There are many positive ways to take care of yourself and stay healthy. Check out these [tips](#) for managing stress and supporting children and/or watch video [here](#).
- As a health care worker, you may need this now more than ever. Kick off the New Year with a Mental Health Check-Up at [CheckItOutNL.ca](#).
- If you're struggling, you are not alone. [Doorways](#) provides quick access to mental health & addictions counselling services. Call the office near you – reach out, we're here to help. Visit [Bridgethegapp.ca](#) for more mental health information, interactive resources and connection to local supports or call the Employee Assistance Program at 1-866-784-5306.
- Please feel free to call the Toll Free COVID-19 Navigation Staff Line (1-833-920-0096) or email COVID19@westernhealth.nl.ca with your questions or inquiries.

Please see our [COVID-19 Intranet page](#) for more information