

COVID-19 UPDATES

COVID-19 measures relaxed

Close contacts of confirmed cases will no longer have to quarantine, effective Thursday, July 29, as part of the Government of Alberta's two-phase approach to lifting COVID-19 measures.

Other changes announced as part of the first phase, which affect the Calgary Zone's COVID-19 adult and pediatric pathways, are as follows:

- Quarantine for close contacts shifts from mandatory to recommended. Isolation for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms and for confirmed positive cases is still required.
 - Unimmunized individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 should monitor for symptoms and seek testing if they become symptomatic.
 - Anyone who is not fully immunized should avoid high-risk locations such as continuing care facilities and crowded indoor spaces if they have been in contact with a case in the past 14 days.
- All positive cases will continue to be notified. Contact tracers will no longer notify close contacts of exposure. Individuals are asked to inform their close contacts when informed of their positive result.
- Contact tracers will continue to investigate cases in high-risk settings such as continuing care facilities.
- Outbreak management and identification will focus on high-risk locations. Community outbreaks with a surge in cases leading to severe outcomes will also be addressed as needed.
- Asymptomatic testing is no longer recommended. Testing is available for symptomatic individuals.
- Mandatory masking remains in acute and continuing care facilities, publicly accessible transit, taxis and ride-share.

Phase two of the changes, which come into effect on Monday, August 16, are listed below. Testing is due to be conducted in physicians' offices starting in September, but few details are available at this time.

- Provincial mandatory masking orders will be lifted. Some masking in acute care or continuing care facilities may still be required.
- Isolation following a positive COVID-19 test result will no longer be required, but strongly recommended.
 - Individuals with symptoms of respiratory infection should remain at home until symptoms have resolved.
 - Staying home when sick remains an important way to care for those around us.
- Isolation hotels and quarantine support will no longer be available.
- Testing will be available for the symptomatic when it is needed to help direct patient care decisions.

- This testing will be available through assessment centres until Tuesday, August 31 and, after that, will take place in primary care settings including physicians' offices. For those with severe illness requiring urgent or emergency care, testing will be available in acute care and hospital settings.
- COVID-19 testing will also be offered as needed in high-risk outbreaks.
- Public health will focus on investigating severe cases that require hospitalization and any deaths.
- Outbreak management and preventative measures will continue focusing on outbreaks in high-risk settings, such as continuing and acute care facilities.
 - Community outbreaks will continue to be addressed as needed.
 - Daycares and schools will be supported with measures that would be effective for any respiratory virus if outbreaks are identified.

Universal masking will not be required in schools once students return. However, it is recommended as a temporary outbreak intervention. A document to support return to schools will be released in mid-August.

The Calgary Zone's [adult](#) and [pediatric](#) pathways are in the process of being updated to reflect these changes. [Watch Tuesday's announcement.](#)

Quick links

Rapid evidence report: Prolonged symptoms after COVID-19

The COVID-19 Scientific Advisory Group has released an updated review of prolonged symptoms after acute COVID-19 infection. The review brings together recent studies to help doctors and other health-care workers plan care for people recovering from COVID. [Read the review.](#)

Online COVID-19 learning series for physicians

The College of Family Physicians of Canada has a six-module [learning series](#) for primary care physicians with information on providing clinical care during the pandemic in person and virtually.