

COVID-19 UPDATES

Friday, May 1

COVID-19 pediatric advice

A COVID-19 pediatric infectious disease tele-advice line is now on [Specialist LINK](#) to support family physicians' care for children who are presumed or confirmed to have COVID-19. Physicians in the Calgary area can use the new COVID-19 Pediatric ID service, which went live today, May 1, to ask questions about testing, infection prevention and control and treatment.

The pediatric line complements the existing [adult COVID-19](#) tele-advice service and PCN [COVID-19 pathway](#). It is available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekends (excluding statutory holidays).

Requesting COVID-19 Pediatric ID tele-advice is simple. Doctors can either visit [Specialist LINK](#), hover over the COVID button and click on "COVID-19 Pediatric ID" or call 403-910-2551 and press 8 - 2. Calls are returned within one hour. Please leave a direct line or cellphone number and have the patient's Personal Health Number at hand.

Please note: COVID-19 Pediatric ID calls will be taken by infectious disease specialists. The adult COVID-19 tele-advice line is supported by specialists from respirology, general internal medicine and infectious disease.

Please see our updated user [guide](#) for more details.

Rural lab update

Effective **Monday, May 4**, rural hospitals and urgent care facilities are [implementing](#) appointment-only lab work for outpatients to reduce the risk of transmission.

Appointments at [affected sites](#) can be made by patient or provider online or by phone. The temporary change will **NOT** affect lab work for hospital patients and all patients needing lab tests will receive them.

Elective surgeries resuming

Alberta Health Services will [resume](#) some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries in a phased approach as soon as **Monday, May 4**.

Dental and other health-care workers, such as physiotherapists, speech language pathologists, respiratory therapists, audiologists, social workers, occupational therapists, dietitians and more, will be allowed to resume services starting May 4, as long as they are following approved guidelines set by their professional colleges.

Testing swabs update

Effective immediately, primary care clinics will **NOT** receive [routine shipments](#) of swabs to test for COVID-19.

Until stocks improve, swabs and transport media are being triaged to hospitals, congregate care facilities and Assessment Centres.

Polyester and cotton-tipped throat swabs with tubes of sterile saline will also be distributed to these sites for testing, in addition to the eSwab collection kits.

Mental health support

Registered psychologists are volunteering their services to frontline health-care workers for free. The Canadian Psychological Association has a [listing](#) of the psychologists who have agreed to return requests within 24 hours and provide services at no charge. If you would like to contact a psychologist, please call one within Alberta.

Specific conditions guides

AHS added a [web page](#) with resources for dealing with specific health conditions, disabilities and special needs during COVID-19.

The 12 conditions include ALS, cancer, Crohn's and colitis, diabetes, epilepsy, MG and LEMS, muscular and myotonic dystrophy, nutrition, obesity, prenatal and postnatal, and spinal cord injuries.

Community Paramedics

Community Paramedic services remain available for patients requiring support for non-COVID-19 health concerns. There is limited access to the Community Paramedics for patients with COVID-19, even through Specialist LINK tele-advice, and availability will be determined at the time of request.

Calgary Zone webinar

On **Monday, May 4 at 6 p.m.**, the Calgary Zone will host a two-hour webinar featuring:

- Dr. Adam Vyse, Calgary Rural PCN, discussing the Cargill outbreak
- Dr. Christine Luelo providing her regular PCN update
- Dr. Jia Yu offering a public health perspective
- Dr. Michael Parkins discussing the latest on the science connected to COVID-19

Registration is required to receive the webinar link: [Register](#) now.

Quick links

Visitation update

Residents of continuing care not in isolation can have [outdoor visits](#) with an essential visitor and another person. People at the end of their life can have up to [two visitors](#) at a time if distance can be maintained.

Testing update

Effectively immediately, anyone with even mild symptoms in continuing care will be [isolated and tested](#) for COVID-19. Staff caring for isolated residents must wear eye protection, gown, mask, visor and gloves.

COVID-19 modelling update

The Government of Alberta has a new “low” [modelling scenario](#), estimating 298 people will require hospitalization and 95 will require critical care when the virus reaches its peak. If current trends continue, it will become the most likely scenario for Alberta.