
INFORMATION BULLETIN

For Immediate Release
December 10, 2020

Received a COVID-19 test result? What to expect

The recent surge in lab-confirmed COVID 19 cases in the Northern Health region is putting pressure on public health case and contact management (contact tracing) resources.

The number of new people testing positive for the virus is impacting public health's ability to quickly contact people who have tested positive. There is currently a backlog of people who have tested positive for COVID-19, but have not yet been contacted by public health.

Northern Health is deploying additional staff to its case and contact management teams, and making other necessary changes to how cases are notified, monitored, and cleared from self-isolation, to clear the backlog and speed up the process in the weeks and months ahead.

Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will receive a call as soon as possible from Public Health – this will not change. Northern BC residents who receive a message with a COVID-19 positive test result, should [self-isolate immediately](#), along with those in their household; Public Health will be in contact with you. Rapid options for receiving COVID-19 test results (text or SMS) mean results may come well before a call from public health – which could take up to 4-5 days. We are working to reduce this time frame with additional staffing, and shifting the focus of detailed contact tracing.

Currently, contact tracing includes public health identifying and directly notifying all close contacts of every confirmed case. NH is shifting to gathering information on, and notifying, close contacts only in certain situations (including health care workers, including those in long-term care; cases related to industrial projects, and in First Nations communities, and; those that are part of a known cluster or outbreak). This will ensure public health can respond quickly to developing clusters of cases or potential outbreaks for those that are most vulnerable.

Rates of COVID-19 activity in the North during this second wave mean that all residents, whether or not they are known close contacts of a lab-confirmed COVID case, are at similar risk. For this reason, everyone should be following public health advice and orders, closely self monitoring for symptoms, and seeking testing if symptoms develop.

Public health will be also be reducing the frequency of calls to people in self isolation after testing positive for COVID-19, and not all people who are self-isolating will receive daily monitoring calls. Individuals may instead receive regular calls from their primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner), or get support by contacting the NH Online (Virtual) Clinic 1-844-645-7811. **Public Health will continue to call all COVID-19 positive individuals at the end of their isolation period, to release them from the requirement to self-isolate.**

Be kind, be calm, be safe.

We understand that this process may leave some individuals feeling uneasy or frustrated. For more information for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, and their close contacts, please visit [this page on the Northern Health website](#).

As always, Northern BC encourages everyone to adhere to current [Provincial guidelines and restrictions](#). If you are experiencing potential COVID-19 symptoms, we continue to ask that you self-isolate, and contact your primary care provider or the NH COVID-19 Online Clinic and Information Line at 1-844-645-7811.

Media Contact: NH media line – 877-961-7724