

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC SK REGION

October 5, 2020

Hello /Tansi,

Confidence that the resurgence of COVID-19 is under control continues to decline, while fears of spread and of contracting it continue to rise. We would like to re-assure you that public health considerations remain paramount in our regional response. The Speech from the Throne's priorities are consistent with our fall planning (vaccination, return to school) combined with additional challenges of determining how to live with COVID during resurgence (growing testing demands, etc.). At the same time, we are preparing for unprecedented vaccination operations.

This year, more than ever, it is critical for everyone to get the flu shot. A resurgence of COVID-19 in the fall and winter months would place additional pressures on the health system. Getting a flu shot will prevent people from getting or spreading the flu, and reduce the number of people needing to seek medical care.

We also recommend using a layered approach to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread, including decreasing the number of physical interactions with people, good hand hygiene and wearing a non-medical mask.



UPDATES

On October 1, the Chief Public Health Officer issued a [statement on National Seniors Day](#). Senior population remains at high risk for severe outcomes from COVID-19. Each of us can do our part to lower the risk of transmission to others, including older adults, by consistently following the public health measures we know to be effective. Please visit this site [for further information on resources for seniors](#).

On September 30, Minister Marc Miller says [Indigenous communities have been facing an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases](#) during the last few weeks. He said Indigenous communities were successful in facing the first wave of COVID-19 with measures that limited the spread of the virus.

On September 29, [Health Canada regulators approved the ID NOW rapid COVID-19 testing device](#) for use in this country — a move that could result in millions more tests for communities across the country grappling with a surge in coronavirus cases. The technology can detect the virus directly from a nasal swab, returning results between 5 and 13 minutes. The testing system is small and lightweight and can easily be transported to remote locations and operated with minimal training.



LATEST COVID-19 INFORMATION

Cases in Saskatchewan First Nations Communities

As of October 5, there are confirmed 99 COVID-19 cases reported in Saskatchewan First Nation communities: 3 active cases, 95 recoveries and one (1) First Nations resident with COVID-19 has died.

Concerned about symptoms or risks?

Call Healthline 811 or use the online [self-assessment tool](#).

NEW DASHBOARD

The [COVIDTrends dashboard](#) is a new tool that provides summary data about COVID-19 by health region. When you search by municipality, or by the first three characters of your postal code, data from your health region will appear. The dashboard will show the number of cases and deaths in the last 14 days as well total counts since January 31, 2020. COVIDTrends also provides links to local public health sources.

This is another way that you can stay informed about COVID-19 activity in your area or another region of Canada.

This tool does not provide any forecasting of what may occur in the coming weeks and months.

New data are released daily by provincial and territorial officials, and the tool is updated daily at 9 p.m. ET to reflect these new data. However, if there are any differences between the national and provincial or territorial data, then the provincial and territorial data should be considered the most up to date.

Low case numbers in a given area does not guarantee a low risk of getting infected. It is important that Canadians continue to adhere to personal protective and community-based measures to protect themselves and others—especially those who are at greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 and those at risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19.

Find out more about the hotspots in the province at [COVID-19 Updates and Alerts page](#). Communities can sign up to receive all SHA alerts (and a daily newsletter) directly by sending an email request to: News@saskhealthauthority.ca

As of October 5, Saskatchewan has officially reported 1,968 cases of COVID-19 and 202,136 COVID-19 tests have been performed in Saskatchewan. For more information, visit: [Cases and Risk of COVID-19 in Saskatchewan](#).

You can protect yourself, others and to help lower the risk of a resurgence of cases of COVID-19 in your area, by:

- maintaining physical distancing;
- wearing masks or cloth face coverings when physical distancing is difficult and according to local public health instructions;
- staying home if experiencing any symptoms, even if mild;
- maintaining good hand and respiratory hygiene;
- limiting time spent in closed indoor spaces, crowded places and close contact situations where there are inadequate measures, protocols and policies in place to reduce the risk of exposure; and
- downloading the COVID Alert app, which helps notify users if they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

GUIDANCE ON FLU

The additional public health measures for COVID-19 that we have emphasized these past months—washing your hands often, staying home when sick, and maintaining physical distancing or wearing a mask when physical distancing is not possible—combined with eating healthy, drinking lots of water and getting plenty of exercise, will position us well for the upcoming flu season.

On September 29, 2020, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) in collaboration with [the National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) released additional guidance on Influenza vaccination in the presence of COVID-19.

The guidance is based on currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion, and will be updated as necessary throughout influenza season as new evidence emerges. The influenza vaccine has a longstanding safety record and is a critical tool to protect against influenza-related disease and to reduce the influenza-associated burden on the health care system, particularly in the context of COVID-19.

The guidance advises that priority should be given to providing influenza vaccine to persons at high risk of severe COVID-19 related illness and those capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk of severe illness related to COVID-19.

The influenza vaccination can be offered to everyone 6 months of age and older who does not have a condition or history of severe adverse reactions that prevent them from getting the vaccine.

Individuals with probable or confirmed COVID-19 and those who are close contacts of a case should defer influenza vaccination during their period of quarantine or isolation.

Individuals who exhibit any respiratory symptoms, including minor symptoms such as sore throat or runny nose are recommended to defer influenza vaccination until their symptoms are gone, as they can pose an unnecessary risk to others and healthcare providers if they have COVID-19.

There is no evidence that supports that influenza vaccination increases the risk of COVID-19 infection.



REGIONAL CONTACTS

Send your questions and requests related to COVID-19 to aadnc.skemergency.aandc@canada.ca to allow our team to provide you with a coordinated and timely response.

Visit our [Saskatchewan portal](#). You will find additional information, guidance and tools to make the best possible decisions for your community. Please also [visit our partner NITHA 's website](#) for more resources on the flu.

