

COVID-19 UPDATE – March 19, 2020

In an effort to keep our community partners connected, we are providing you with regular COVID-19 updates.

Key Updates for March 19, 2020

- For a full list of updates from VCH visit vch.ca
- Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, has declared a public health emergency and the Province of B.C. has declared a general state of emergency
- Social distancing is a priority for all citizens – keep two arms' length from others, wash your hands frequently
- All schools are now closed

Hospital Procedures

As of March 16, VCH hospitals will only undertake urgent and emergency procedures and will postpone all non-urgent (elective) scheduled surgeries. Hospitals will review operating-room capacity daily to prioritize urgent and emergency cases. Due to the cases of COVID-19 at Lions Gate Hospital (LGH), we are cancelling elective and urgent procedures at LGH as part of our preparations to increase inpatient capacity.

We are monitoring the situation closely and reviewing preparedness plans for all hospital sites.

Long-term care homes and Assisted Living Facilities

In our on-going efforts to protect the health and safety of residents in care homes, we are changing our visitation guidelines to "essential visits" only for both long-term care and assisted living facilities. This includes compassionate visits for end-of-life, as well as visits that support resident care plans, such as assisting with feeding and/or mobility.

Testing

Not everyone who has COVID-19 symptoms needs testing. If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home and self-isolate. If you are a member of the public with mild respiratory symptoms (including cold symptoms) you should not be tested. Seek medical assessment if respiratory symptoms worsen.

Symptomatic health care workers are asked to be tested. The Government of B.C. has released a self-assessment available [online here \(covid19.thrive.health\)](https://www.covid19.thrive.health). Contact 1-888-268-4319 (1-888-COVID19) between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily for COVID-19-related questions.

Key Messages to Share

- Wash your hands and stay home if possible
- Practice social distancing if you have to go out
- If you think you have COVID-19 take the self-assessment here: [covid19.thrive.health](https://www.covid19.thrive.health)
- Self-isolate if you have COVID-19 symptoms

