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**Sent:** October 7, 2020 2:17 PM

**To:** Alice Johnston <[AJohnston@cariboord.ca](mailto:AJohnston@cariboord.ca)>

**Subject:** Update from Northern Health: Thanksgiving celebrations, Halloween, breastfeeding, and more



# COMMUNITY UPDATE

*The latest from Northern Health*

**October 7, 2020**

**Note:** Please share any information in this update as appropriate.

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## **COVID-19**

### **COVID-19 case counts and statements**

Confirmed NH cases since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the **October 6 provincial update**:

- **324** cases
  - **16** active
  - **2** new

**Daily update  
on COVID-19**

[gov.bc.ca/covid19](https://gov.bc.ca/covid19)



- 3 deaths (0 new)

As always, it is important that we remain vigilant in our communities.

For the latest provincial numbers, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 dashboard](#), which is updated Monday-Friday. The dashboard may not work in all browsers; Chrome is suggested. Surveillance reports for COVID-19, which includes breakdown of cases by Health Service Delivery Area, are [posted every Thursday on the BCCDC website](#).

- [Joint statement on Province of B.C.'s COVID-19 response](#) – October 6, 2020
- [BCCDC Surveillance report](#) – October 1, 2020



## Thanksgiving and other celebrations during COVID-19

Fall is a time for gatherings and celebrations. As the days grow shorter and the weather grows colder, we long to be inside in the presence of good food and good company. However, this fall we must take extra precautions to ensure those celebrations are done safely. COVID-19 is changing the way we interact with each other, and the holidays are no exception.

The BCCDC has developed [guidelines to make your celebrations as safe as possible this year](#). These guidelines provide advice for both hosting and attending celebrations and cover topics such as where to gather, food preparation, cleaning, and appropriate activities for your celebrations.

Keep in mind that the more space you have, and the less time you spend with others, the safer you are when getting together.

For more information, see the [full BCCDC guidelines](#).

Photo by [Priscilla Du Preez](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## It's not a trick: Safe guidelines for treat-givers and trick-or-treaters this Halloween

This Halloween may look a little different as we find ways to safely enjoy the holiday. The [BCCDC has developed guidelines](#) to let us celebrate Halloween, while still maintaining needed safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The BCCDC guidelines include topics on:

- Halloween parties
- Trick-or-treating
- Handing out treats
- Halloween decorations

For more information, see the [full BCCDC guidelines](#).

Photo by [Bekir Dönmez](#) on [Unsplash](#)



## FNHA: COVID-19 advisory on sweat lodges and potlatches

**A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, FNHA Acting Chief Medical Officer**

Hello everyone. I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well even in the midst of this pandemic. I commend you for all the safety measures you are taking to avoid getting or spreading COVID-19. Let's continue staying strong and staying the course. What we are doing is working, and we will get through this together.

I'm writing this to remind everyone that the FNHA continues to strongly advise Indigenous communities in BC to postpone all gatherings until the pandemic has passed. This includes sweat lodges and potlatches, even though they are key spiritual and cultural activities.

The FNHA acknowledges their significance to our health and wellness, as well as the trauma caused by past banning of these activities. However, there is a time for everything, and now – during the COVID-19 pandemic – is *not* the time to hold or

participate in these or any other kinds of group activities. Any gathering where close contact can occur can cause transmission and none of us are immune. Even if we are healthy, we should be thinking about not transmitting the infection to others around us – our Elders and those with underlying health issues.

Read the [full story on the FNHA website](#).

Photo by [FNHA](#)

## New BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections

[New modelling and projection figures](#) are available from the BCCDC. These figures represent the latest epidemiological numbers and data trends and were used in the [October 5 COVID-19 joint statement](#).



[All BCCDC COVID-19 modelling and projections](#) are available on both the [BCCDC website](#) and on the [modelling and projections page](#) of the NH physician website.

## Trusted links and resources for COVID-19

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): A Northern Health Guide for Your Community](#)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [HealthLink BC COVID-19 page](#)
- [WHO FAQ](#)
- [Health Canada FAQ](#)
- [COVID-19 content in other languages](#)
- WorkSafe BC - [COVID-19 information and resources](#)
- Northern Health COVID-19 Online Clinic & Information Line: **1-844-645-7811**
- For **non-medical info**, call **1-888-COVID19 / 1-888-268-4319** 7 days, 7:30 am - 8 pm

For current information on restrictions on travel, gatherings and other issues, see the [Provincial Health Officer's webpage on current health topics](#).

## OVERDOSE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE



## Compassion, Inclusion, Engagement (CIE) support in Northern Health

Compassion, Inclusion, Engagement (CIE) events can support teams engaged in overdose response. CIE is a provincial partnership between the First Nations Health Authority and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to address stigma and discrimination experienced by people who use substances, particularly those who are Indigenous.

CIE supports people with lived experience, primarily in remote and rural communities, in forming peer groups. Peer groups have been instrumental in advocating for the rights of people who use drugs and for meaningful change in drug policy that saves lives. CIE peer groups are empowered and supported in two ways: through skill and capacity-building, and through seed funding.

By providing capacity-building support, these groups learn tangible skills such as organizing, developing a mission, navigating group dynamics, grant-writing, financial management, and more. The seed funding that's provided supports their on-the-ground work, which ranges from operating peer-run overdose prevention sites, training and distribution of naloxone and harm reduction supplies, providing needle cleanup, and providing employment and income to members.

By supporting new and emerging peer groups, and by leveraging the BCCDC's position as a provincial leader, CIE ensures that the voices of people who use drugs are at the table with decision-makers.

Through CIE, peer groups across BC were supported to take on projects related to stigma elimination, harm reduction, and overdose response in their communities, and were free to choose the most effective ways to create that change for themselves, in relation to their community.

The majority of the groups chose to employ peers as trainers for overdose prevention and harm reduction services, while other groups engaged in advocacy work that pushed levels of government for safe supply. This work included people with lived and living experience of substance use in community conversations, decision-making, and advocating for increased harm reduction/overdose prevention services.

One example of work done by peer groups is the Clean Team in Quesnel, BC. The Clean Team is led by, and composed of, peers with lived experience of homelessness and substance use. The peers are



employed part-time and perform early morning cleanups of needles, drug paraphernalia, and litter around business improvement areas, schoolyards, and other “hotspot” locales.

More recently, the CIE team travelled to Terrace to support the Community Action Team in their priority setting.

As part of our harm reduction regional supports, Northern Health has a regional peer coordinator that can help you link to programs such as these.

For more information, check out [Toward the Heart](#).

Photo by [Dave Lowe](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Other organizational news

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### Helping families to breastfeed their babies

Canada celebrates [Breastfeeding Week](#) each year from October 1 to 7. This is a good time for us to look at how we can protect, promote, and support breastfeeding all year long.

Breastfeeding is the best way for a mother to feed her baby. Northern Health supports the following recommendations from [Canadian health organizations](#):

- Exclusively breastfeed infants for the first six months of life (i.e., the infant only receives breast milk without any additional food or drink unless medically indicated);
- Introduce complementary, iron rich, solid foods and other fluids around the age of six months;
- Continue to breastfeed for up to two years and beyond; and
- Infants and toddlers who receive any amount of breast milk be given a daily liquid [vitamin D supplement](#) of 400 IU (10 mcg).

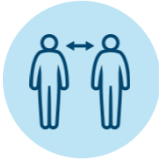
For more information about breastfeeding and support for breastfeeding, see [Northern Health's breastfeeding page](#).

## YOUR HEALTH, A PRIORITY

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**Wash your hands often** with warm running water and soap for at least 20 seconds.



**Avoid contact**, keep a safe distance of at least 2 meters from others, and limit your movements to reduce contagion.



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