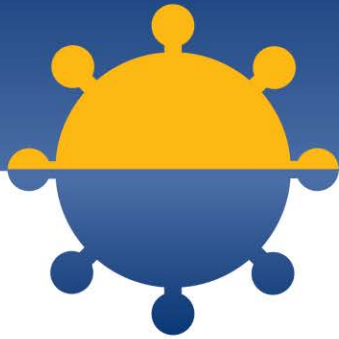


Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Key Facts

We are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

A sudden increase in COVID-19 infections will mean that more people use the health system.

This could impact the capacity of our health system to provide care to everyone who needs it.

By slowing the spread of the virus, we protect the people that need health care the most.

Slowing the virus means that people will be able to access care when and where they need it.

80% of people who are infected will have mild symptoms that can be cared for at home.

Children with medical complexity do not seem to be at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19.

Practice the same precautions as you do around the flu.

Children with medical complexity often require suctioning, nebulized medicines or non-invasive ventilation.

This means that healthcare workers will need to take extra precautions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SLOW TRANSMISSION

Take care of your family by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Monitor your family.

If any of your family members have a fever, new cough, or difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1 and speak with a nurse.

COVID-19 information for families of children with medical complexity

March 27, 2020

The best source of up-to-date information on the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in British Columbia is the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC): www.bccdc.ca. This document provides answers to additional questions for families of children with medical complexity. BC Children's Hospital also has a webpage www.bcchildrens.ca/covid19 for people with appointments at the hospital which they update regularly.

Does your child have medical complexity?

You child has medical complexity if they:

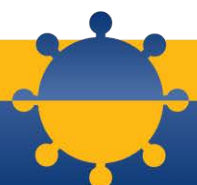
- Have special healthcare needs, like medical care, specialized therapy and educational needs
- Have one or more medical conditions that could be lifelong (also called **chronic conditions**)
- Use medical technology, like a feeding tube, tracheostomy tube, or wheelchair, in daily life
- Use health-care services more often than most children¹

Examples of medical complexity are:

- Neurologic impairments
- Congenital abnormalities

¹ Cohen, E., Kuo, D. Z., Agrawal, R., Berry, J. G., Bhagat, S. K., Simon, T. D., & Srivastava, R. (2011). Children with medical complexity: an emerging population for clinical and research initiatives. *Pediatrics*, 127(3), 529-538.

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



- Ongoing special needs after cancer
- Severe autism

Q1. Should my child go to their appointment at BC Children's Hospital?

Your child must receive medical care for their chronic conditions.

Check if your child has an **essential appointment**. A decision is made by your child's physician in partnership with you about whether an appointment is essential. An essential appointment is time-sensitive. Your child's health will get worse if they do not go to this appointment in person. If you do not know, call your health care team.

- **For essential appointments:** Call your child's clinic before the appointment. Tell the clinic about your travel history, and any possible symptoms.
- **For non-essential appointments:** The clinic will contact you. We are moving non-essential appointments at BC Children's Hospital to another format. Your child's appointment may happen on the phone, or by home videoconferencing. Many community paediatricians are also moving appointments to these formats.

Q2. Who should I contact about COVID-19 and my child?

If your child has medical complexity, contact your health care provider in the community or at BC Children's Hospital. Most teams at BC Children's have 24/7 coverage and can provide advice.

If your child does not have a team at BC Children's, please contact your community paediatrician.

Q3. What if my child needs urgent or emergency care?

If you have a child with medical complexity, you often know when your child needs urgent medical care. Rely on your experience. If you are worried, call 9-1-1. If you are comfortable bringing your child to BC Children's Hospital or another Emergency Department (ED):

1. Call your child's health care provider in the community or at BC Children's. Tell them that you are going to the ED.
2. Your child's health care providers will call the ED with information about your child. The ED will prepare to see your child without putting them or others at risk.
3. Some kinds of care, like nebulization, suctioning, and non-invasive ventilation, may spread viruses. If your child receives these treatments, call the ED 30 minutes before you arrive. The ED will then be ready to take the correct precautions.
4. The hospitals are practicing social distancing:
 - In ED and outpatient areas, only one adult caregiver is allowed
 - For inpatients, two adult caregivers are allowed.

Q4. What if my child needs emergency care, and I think they may have COVID-19?

If your child has a tracheotomy, is on a ventilator, or requires frequent suctioning then call ahead to alert the ED: Call the Emergency Department (ED) first. When you call ahead, you help the team provide the best care possible. You also help to protect others against infection.

Your child may not see a health care provider any sooner, or get a room right away. ED nurses and doctors triage all patients according to severity.

Q5. Can my child or family member be tested for COVID-19?

At this time, only specific people are being tested for COVID-19. For patients this means those who are hospitalized or about to be hospitalized. Use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool at bc.thrive.health. If you have questions call your primary clinic at BC Children's, your community paediatrician, or 8-1-1 to ask if your child or family member should be



tested.

Q6. What if my child needs routine medical care?

Some children may need routine bloodwork or other medical tests. Talk to the care provider who is ordering the test. Ask if you can move the test to a later date.

If your child needs the test, call LifeLabs to make an appointment. This will reduce your time in the waiting room.

Q7. Should my child stay home?

At this time, we are recommending that everyone stay home as much as possible. If that is not possible, practice physical distancing – be sure to stay at least 2 metres from other people.

Q8. What should I do if my family gets quarantined?

Make sure you have enough food and medical supplies for two weeks. This includes medicine, oxygen, wound care and feeds. Monitor food and supplies carefully.

Find people outside your immediate family that can bring you groceries and supplies. Plan how you will get more supplies, if you need them.

Information on specific populations and clinical programs:

Home Tracheostomy and Ventilation Program

- If your child has increased respiratory symptoms, please follow their escalation plan if they have one, or otherwise contact the HTV team or Respiriology doctor on-call for advice.
- If you are coming to hospital for urgent care, please ensure you bring all equipment your child needs on a daily basis, including their ventilator, suction, medication and feeds, and be aware that wait times may be longer than usual.
- Please be aware that home nursing availability may fall due to sickness and need for self-isolation. You should have a back-up plan for how to care for your child, both day and night, in case of this event.

Metabolic/Biochemical Diseases Clinic

- Special Products office has confirmed that their supply chain for special products (formula) are normal. They will deliver formula to families, if needed. You can phone them or use email, whichever you are currently doing.

Common questions answered by

- BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) www.bccdc.ca/covid19
- HealthLink BC call 8-1-1
- BC Children's Hospital www.bcchildrens.ca/covid19

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