

Dropping Some Public Health Restrictions & Prescribing COVID-19 Treatment Therapies – March 11, 2022

Yesterday, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry said we are progressing well through the pandemic – lab confirmed cases have come down dramatically and hospitalizations continue to decrease. She announced the following changes to provincial restrictions, starting today:

- Repeal mask mandate for indoor public spaces
- Restore visitation in long-term care by March 18
- Lift capacity limits for faith services
- Overnight child/youth camps allowed

Dr. Henry said **some settings will still require masks – including health care**. Other public services where physical distancing is not possible, such as transit, may also continue to require masks. Students and staff at educational institutions will not be required to wear masks when they return from spring break, and guidance for child care settings will be updated following consultation with the sector. Starting on April 8th:

- The vaccine card will no longer be required to access non-essential events, services and businesses
- Businesses can transition from COVID Safety Plans to communicable disease plan
- On campus post-secondary residence vaccine requirement will be lifted

With the exception of the change in [wellness check procedures](#), infection prevention measures in Island Health are unchanged, including the continued requirement to mask, distance and use other PPE as required in clinical settings. Visitor screening procedures are also unchanged at this time. We are reviewing the new direction and will provide more information as soon as possible.

New Therapies for COVID-19

There are two new therapies available for mild to moderate COVID-19 infection at Island Health.

1. Nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid) - an oral antiviral drug now available from retail pharmacies in British Columbia. Any physician/nurse practitioner is now authorized to prescribe this medication using a special prescription form. The drug will be dispensed from community pharmacies.
2. Sotrovimab - an intravenous monoclonal antibody therapy which can be administered at one of four infusion sites within Island Health. Outpatient therapy requires referral to the [Outpatient Covid Therapeutics Clinic \(OCTC\)](#). Sotrovimab may also be administered to patients in the emergency room or to those who are hospitalized with mild Covid-19 but does require approval by an Infectious Disease (ID) physician.

COVID-19 Treatment Process Summary:

1. Confirm patient is Covid positive (by either PCR or RAT) and within first 5-7 days of illness. Must meet criteria for mild disease: must be symptomatic but not require oxygen support. If met, evaluate if patient is treatment eligible for [Paxlovid OR Sotrovimab](#).
2. Evaluate patient for [COVID-19 treatment criteria](#). Patient must be in one of the high risk groups at increased risk for progression to hospitalization to qualify for treatment.

3. If patient meets criteria for treatment, assess for appropriateness of Paxlovid therapy. Physician/nurse practitioner performs a medication history to assess for serious drug interactions.
4. If clinical case review and assistance is required, contact an [Island Health ID physician](#).
5. If pharmacist support or resources are needed, please use [appropriate online tool](#), or phone the Provincial pharmacist support line that is available for any clinician to contact: Mon-Fri 0830-1630; 1-866-604-5924.
6. If patient is a Paxlovid candidate, any physician/nurse practitioner can write the [prescription](#). Download the prescription, fill it out, and it can be given to patient/family member or faxed. The BC Pharmacy Association has a [‘locator’](#) with pharmacies known to stock Paxlovid.
7. If the patient is not a candidate for Paxlovid but meets criteria for Sotrovimab, refer them to the [OCTC clinic](#) for evaluation and potential treatment at an infusion clinic. A referring physician/nurse practitioner may phone the line and leave a message. OCTC: 250-737-2030 ext 44685.

Alternatively, patients can seek Paxlovid treatment directly by first visiting the [BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool website](#). If patients are unable to fill out the questionnaire online and need help to complete it over the phone, please call Service BC at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319).

Please see the full guide developed by the B.C. COVID-19 Therapeutics Committee for more information: [Clinical Practice Guide for the Use of Therapeutics in Mild-Moderate COVID-19](#)

Island Health Region Total Vaccines Administered To Date	% Population Immunized (12+) 2nd Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (5+) 2nd Dose To Date	% Population Immunized (12+) Two Doses & Boosters To Date
1,944, 470	93.1%	89.4%	61.1%

NEW RESOURCES

[COVID-19 Antivirals and How to Prescribe Them – A Presentation](#)

A presentation by Dr. Eric Partlow delivered online for Primary Care Grand Rounds on March 10, 2022.

[Doctors of BC: Guidance on Prescribing COVID-19 Anti-Viral Medications](#)

Doctors of BC hosted a [recorded Town Hall](#) on Prescribing Therapies for Mild-Moderate COVID-19 and shared the attached presentation.

- Presenters: Jolanta Piszczek, Jennifer Grant, Eric Partlow, Maureen O’Donnell

[BCCDC Patient Handouts for New Covid-19 Anti-viral Medications](#)

- [Patient Information about Paxlovid](#)
- [Patient Information about Sotrovimab](#)

[UBC Graduate Certificate in Primary Health Care](#)

Passionate about team-based care and improving patient outcomes? Lead the transformation to an advanced model of patient-centered care with this part-time UBC graduate-level certificate. Learn from expert clinicians and share strategies and approaches in a supportive, interprofessional cohort.

[Past Issues of the Island Health Primary Care Update](#)

The Island Health Archive for past issues of the Primary Care Update.

LINKS & FAQs

BCCDC Resources:

- [New Today](#): This section of the website highlights the latest guidance documents and updates to the website for health professionals.
- [About the vaccines](#)
- [Resources for Health Professionals](#)
- [Reporting adverse events](#)

Doctors of BC:

- [Info for doctors getting or giving the vaccine](#)
- [Updated toolkit for doctors' offices](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- [ImmunizeBC FAQ](#)