Know Your Risk.
Know Your Options.

First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Testing and Treatment for Community Members at Risk of Severe Illness of COVID-19

KNOW YOUR RISK

Due to medical conditions or vaccination status, you may be at higher risk of getting severely ill from COVID-19. If so, you might be eligible for treatment if diagnosed early after the onset of your symptoms. You can self-assess for potential treatment eligibility online: https://covidtreatments.gov.bc.ca/. Those who are eligible should have a testing plan in place. There is more information on testing options below.

Currently, those at high-risk for severe illness and hospitalization, who may be eligible for treatment are:

- Immunocompromised
- Clinically extremely vulnerable
- Self-identify as Indigenous and
  - Age 70+ regardless of COVID-19 vaccine or infection history
  - Age 50+ who had 1 or 2 doses of COVID_19 vaccine or previously diagnosed with COVID-19
  - Age 18+ who are unvaccinated or have no previous COVID-19 infection

It is important to know if you are at risk. If you are unsure, have a discussion with your primary care provider to determine whether you would be at risk for severe illness if infected with COVID-19. If you do not have a primary care provider please access:

- For clients who may benefit from treatment and how to get the treatment, visit gov.bc.ca/covidtreatments or call Service BC for assistance: 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) (7:30 am to 8 pm).

  - If you do not have a family doctor, nurse practitioner, or specialist, or you are unable to see them immediately, please call Service BC at 1-888-268-4319 to start the assessment process. Tell them you are calling about COVID-19 treatment options and that you have completed the online screening tool.

- FNHA Virtual Doctor of the Day (https:// www.fnha.ca/what-we-do/ehealth/virtual-doctor-of-the-day)

- Rural Coordination Centre of BC Real-time virtual support (https://rccbc.ca/rtvs/)

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS FOR PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Vaccines

Vaccines are still the best way to prevent severe illness from COVID-19. It is important to get a COVID-19 vaccine before you become ill. They are safe and effective at preventing most severe outcomes of COVID-19 infection. However, even if fully vaccinated some people are still at risk for severe illness due to certain medical conditions.

Medications

There are now medications that can be prescribed by a primary care provider that may help prevent severe illness and hospitalization from COVID-19. These medications must be given early in your COVID-19 illness to be fully effective (by day 5 or day 7 depending on the treatment prescribed). This is why it is important for you to know beforehand if you are at risk of severe illness and if you would be eligible for treatment. Early diagnosis means early treatment.

You would be eligible for treatment if you test positive for COVID-19 on any test and a health care provider has determined it is safe and appropriate to prescribe COVID-19 treatment. All of this must happen in a timely manner. For more info visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/treatments#antiviral. One treatment available must be given through a vein and requires a visit to a clinic or hospital. The other is a course of antiviral pills that can be taken at home.

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS FOR TESTING

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are at risk of severe illness you should be tested with the most sensitive test available to you – preferably by a health care provider.

There are a variety of testing options, depending on your location and community. Some testing options are more sensitive at picking up a positive result than others. It is a good idea to be familiar with what testing options are available to you in your community so that you know how to get tested quickly.

If you have tested positive on a rapid at home testing kit, you should connect with your primary care provider immediately as treatment may be available. There are a few different types of tests available in B.C such as:

Nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) based assays

NAAT-based tests are more reliable for detecting small amounts of COVID-19 than rapid antigen tests (RAT) and are less likely to give a false-negative result. For this reason, these tests are preferred for higher risk individuals when possible as they will likely detect the COVID-19 virus earlier and more reliably.

- GeneXpert Xpress SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR
- Abbott ID Now COVID-19 RNAT Assay
- Lucira™ COVID-19 All-In-One Test Kit LAMP

Antigen-Based Assays (Rapid Antigen Tests-RAT)

A positive RAT result **is** accepted for treatment eligibility. These tests require more virus in your body in order to register a positive result, therefore you may have to be further along into your illness before a RAT test detects the virus. If you are higher risk for severe COVID-19 due to medical condition or vaccination status and have a negative result from a RAT, it is recommended that you re-test everyday until 5- 7 days after symptom onset or preferably seek a NAAT based test as soon as possible. This is recommended as false negatives can occur in early infection with RAT tests.

- BTNX
- Panbio
- Artron

TESTING OPTIONS IN OR NEAR YOUR COMMUNITY

Consult your community health nurse or health care provider to determine what testing options are available in your region. You can learn more about COVID-19 testing at FNHA.ca/coronavirus.