

# COVID-19 Status

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## **MAY 21, 2020**

We have confirmed 19 new cases of COVID-19 over the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of active cases to 912. We've had a total of 6,735 cases in Alberta; 5,637 have now recovered. Of the total cases, we suspect 624 cases may have been acquired through an unknown source in the community (this does not include cases associated with outbreaks), 283 have been hospitalized and 52 have been in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Currently, there are 58 cases in hospital, with seven in an ICU.

We must report the sad news of another death in the past 24 hours. Our heartfelt condolences go out to the individual's family and care teams. Because a previously reported death has been recoded as non-COVID-related, the provincial total remains at 128 lives lost in Alberta related to the virus.

2,607 tests were completed over the last 24 hours, bringing our total COVID-19 tests to 221,571 since the start of the pandemic.

## Things You Need to Know

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### **New risk assessment, labelling for hand sanitizer**

Health Canada has recently approved the use of technical-grade ethanol in the manufacturing of some hand sanitizer products, in place of pharmaceutical-grade ethanol. With this change, Health Canada has released a new risk assessment, as well as new labelling requirements. This will impact Microsan-brand hand sanitizer products used in AHS facilities.

We understand and appreciate that staff may be concerned about this new risk assessment and labelling from Health Canada.

Your safety is our priority. We have done a thorough review of the Health Canada assessment and completed additional research, confirming that the risk of technical-grade ethanol, now being used in place of pharmaceutical-grade ethanol in the manufacturing of the product, is very low.

Although risk is considered low, we anticipate that staff may notice a stronger or different odour associated with the products manufactured with technical-grade ethanol.

We want to ensure that you are proactively informed and we have prepared an FAQ document for your additional information. This outlines Health Canada's new assessment and related interpretation for human health.

If you would like to consider reducing your use of the hand sanitizer products impacted by this new assessment, we suggest that you replace use of hand sanitizer with warm water and soap, where practical and possible. For more detail, see the [FAQ](#).

### **Enhanced screening measures at Edmonton, Calgary international airports**

Starting today, AHS teams have been deployed to the Edmonton and Calgary international airports to screen travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada for symptoms of COVID-19 and ensure travellers have an isolation plan in place. AHS has worked closely with the Government of Alberta, Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency to plan and launch this initiative.

Travellers arriving in Alberta from outside Canada will be required to pass a provincial checkpoint, undergo a thermal screen and complete a provincial isolation questionnaire, including how they will travel to their isolation location, and their plans for getting essentials such as food and medication.

Government of Alberta staff will follow up with arriving travellers within three days to ensure they are following public health orders and have the information and support they need. Travellers are encouraged to download the ABTraceTogether app when they arrive in Alberta to enhance the current manual tracing process and help protect Albertans and their loved ones.



International passenger Brent Lastiuka fills out paperwork as Alberta Health Services registered nurse Linda Pufong assists during the screening checkpoint at the Edmonton International Airport. Starting today, AHS staff have been deployed to screen travellers for symptoms of COVID-19 and connect with returning international travellers regarding their isolation plans at both the Edmonton and Calgary international airports.

### **Survey prompts mask extender review**

From April 29 to May 8, the PPE Task Force conducted a survey on mask extender use. We received an excellent response from people in many roles across the organization, with more than 3,500 staff sharing their experiences and feedback.

We learned mask extenders or “ear savers” have become more commonly used to relieve pressure behind the ears associated with continuous masking requirements. As there are numerous types in use, AHS is undertaking a further review to ensure mask extenders can be removed and reused safely and effectively.

In the meantime, here are some tips for your safe and effective use:

- Don and doff your mask extender properly to avoid self-contamination. Wash your hands both before you don **and** before you doff your mask extender with your mask. Many of the types currently in use are difficult to clean, which means the virus may remain on the surface. Touching your face after touching the mask extender may increase the risk of self-contamination with the virus.
- Disinfect/clean your mask extender right after taking off your mask. If this is not possible, then you should discard that mask extender, and use a clean/new mask extender when putting on a new mask.
- Mask extenders must NOT be used with N95 respirators, as they may impact the fit and seal. Please contact your local WHS office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the fit of your N95 respirator.

Thank you again to those who took the time to complete the survey, and also to those in the community who are making and donating mask extenders for our care providers.

### **COVID-19 testing for healthcare workers — the latest numbers**

We continue to update the testing data for healthcare workers in the [AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing dashboard](#). These statistics provide the total number of AHS, Covenant Health and Alberta Precision Laboratories (APL) employees and physicians tested, including a breakdown of the number of positive tests and those who have been confirmed to have been exposed in the workplace.

As of May 19:

- 21,795 employees (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 213 (or 0.98 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 213 employees who have tested positive, 29 (or 13.6 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 48 of the 213 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 1,326 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 27 (or 2.04 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 27 physicians who have tested positive, none has been confirmed to have acquired infection through a workplace exposure (with two of the 27 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).

For more information, see the AHS Healthcare Worker COVID-19 Testing [infographic](#) and [dashboard](#).

### **World Family Doctor Day**

The impact and importance of family doctors on the quality and experience of care for Albertans is undeniable. Yesterday was World Family Doctor Day — first declared by WONCA (The World

Organization of Family Doctors) in 2010. It is a day to highlight the role and contribution of family doctors in healthcare systems around the world.

Throughout this pandemic, Alberta’s physicians have been going above and beyond to continue to provide the same high level of care to Albertans that they always have. Whether that’s expanding their services to include phone or virtual visits, or being available for in-person care, our physicians have shown their dedication to Albertans.

Thank you, sincerely, for the dedication you’ve shown for your colleagues, your patients and their families, through your daily routines, and during this unprecedented time.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Tip of the Day**

The daily series - *PPE Tip of the Day* – features quick and simple reminders you can take forward into your practice, from shift to shift.

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**N95 mask use:**

A fit-tested and seal-checked N95 respirator should be worn when performing an [aerosol-generating medical procedure](#) on a patient who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, in addition to gloves, gown and eye protection. For more guidance on AGMPs, visit [ahs.ca/agmp](https://ahs.ca/agmp).

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You can learn more about N95 mask use in this PPE Do and Don’t video.



To see previous PPE Tips of the Day, please visit the PPE Tips archive, [here](#).

## In the Zones

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### **Calgary Zone Emergency Operations Centre (ZEOC) — New assessment centre opens**

With the recent announcement of COVID-19 testing being available for asymptomatic residents in Calgary, a Calgary Zone team has opened another location for residents to be tested through the existing appointment process.

A new fast-track assessment centre opened in southwest Calgary on Tuesday, May 19, with one evening shift. The centre will have the full two shifts (day and evening) and expects to remain busy for the foreseeable future. About 700 people have been booked and seen at this new location between Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday evening.

This new assessment centre is one of seven fast track assessment centres open in the Calgary Zone.

Thanks go out to the amazing team that thought of this location and quickly organized it to make it a reality over the long weekend.



Staff at a new fast-track assessment centre in southwest Calgary prepare for testing. About 700 people were booked and seen at this new location in slightly over 24 hours.



### Calgary Zone — Virtual adult day program launches

When a Calgary Zone adult day program needed to be paused in March due to COVID-19, AHS recreational therapist Brandee Elliott developed an alternative program for these clients that could be delivered online. [Go The Distance is helping seniors in Didsbury, Strathmore and Airdrie stay connected.](#) “It’s the highlight of the week,” says one participant of the trivia games and other activities. The program is now spreading across the province.



## Be Well - Be Kind

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### Celebrity shout-out

Canadian actors, musicians, athletes, supermodels and poets continue sending us their videos of support for frontline healthcare workers at AHS and beyond.

Today’s shout-out is from [Heather Marks, an Alberta-born supermodel and actress who has appeared on the cover of Vogue.](#)

“You guys sacrifice so much every single day so that we can continue to be safe,” she says. “Thank you for all you have done. Thank you for all you continue to do. You guys are real heroes.”



### **Supporting communities during COVID-19**

As AHS continues to respond to this pandemic, there are many individuals and families needing support now more than ever. This includes access to food, shelter and mental health supports. If you are interested in [donating to a COVID-19 relief fund in your community](#), you can do so through the [United Way](#), or one of our [69 foundation partners](#) who raise funds for healthcare across Alberta. Donations can be made by donating up to five vacation days, a one-time donation, or payroll deduction donations over several payroll cycles until June 30.

Thank you for all you are doing to fight for and support your families, patients, and all Albertans.

### **Closing message**

Today marks 11 weeks since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Alberta. If you were to ask us what's impressed us so far about our pandemic response, our list would be lengthy, with innovation and ingenuity high on the list. We've all had to adapt and change our workflows in order to continue our work during a time of pandemic — and you've gone the extra mile to ensure patients continue to receive the care they need, even if we deliver that care differently than we did pre-COVID-19. The [video](#) in today's message — which tells the story of a recreational therapist creating an online adult day program for clients whose in-person program has been paused — is one of countless examples of AHS staff being nimble and inventive in the face of new challenges. We remind you that [we wish to capture all of our learnings](#) from this time and perhaps bring our COVID-era innovations with us whenever we enter our post-COVID world. Help us do that by sending your ideas and innovations to [beyondcovid@ahs.ca](mailto:beyondcovid@ahs.ca), and we'll collect and share them with our colleagues across the province. Thank you for this, and for everything you do, every day.

*Please Note: This message has been modified from the AHS Daily Updates.*

**\*\*\*Please share this information as appropriate\*\*\***

**\*\*\*For Alberta Health Services – Indigenous specific questions/concerns please**

**email [ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca](mailto:ahs.ecc.operations.ih@ahs.ca) \*\*\***

**\*\*\*For Indigenous Services Canada please**

**email [sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca](mailto:sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca) \*\*\***

*Josipa Pavicic on behalf of Nadine McRee*

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