

COVID-19 Status

AUG 25, 2020

As of August 20, a total of 12,748 people in Alberta have been confirmed with COVID-19, with 1,144 active cases. 1,928 cases have been from an unknown exposure. The average number of daily cases confirmed between August 13 and 19 is 92, compared to 97 the previous week, a decrease of five per cent. As of August 20, 43 people are in hospital with the virus, with 9 of those in an intensive care unit. In all, 11,374 Albertans have recovered from COVID-19.

COVID-19 continues to seriously affect Albertans, and sadly, we continue to see losses of life in this pandemic. Since the COVID-19 outbreak began, 230 Albertans have died of causes related to the virus; 10 deaths have occurred this week. We continue to offer our condolences to the families and loved ones of these individuals, and send our support to the caregivers who have lost patients to COVID-19.

As of August 19, a total of 855,968 COVID-19 tests have been completed in Alberta since the start of the pandemic. In the past week 62,777 tests were completed, an average of 8,968 per day. Over the coming weeks, Alberta Health is encouraging asymptomatic Albertans desiring testing to wait briefly to book their tests, in order to allow space for Alberta's teachers and school staff to get tested prior to the start of classes.

Things You Need to Know

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 Aug 19:

- 44,558 employees (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19, and of those tested, 380 (or 0.85 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 380 employees who have tested positive, 67 (or 17.6 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with 70 of the 380 positive results still under investigation as to the source of infection).
- 2,834 physicians (AHS, APL, and Covenant combined) have been tested for COVID-19 and of those tested, 35 (or 1.24 per cent) have tested positive.
- Of the 35 physicians who have tested positive, three (or 8.6 per cent) acquired their infection through a workplace exposure (with one of the 35 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](#).

Intensive Care Capacity across AHS

Recently, concerns were raised publicly through media coverage about the ability of AHS Intensive Care Units (ICU) to handle the demands of COVID-19 in our province. It is important to understand that ICUs typically operate at 90 per cent capacity and are staffed based on needs and demands. Many factors can influence the capacity of our ICUs, including seasonal illnesses such as influenza and injuries related to seasonal activities. COVID-19 patients are currently a small part of that demand.

We've monitored admissions to ICU beds due to COVID-19 closely since the beginning of the pandemic. The highest number of admissions to date has been 21, which we saw at the end of April. Right now, there are approximately 9 people with COVID-19 in an ICU bed across the province:

- 4 patients in Edmonton
- 1 patient in Calgary
- 2 patients in the North Zone
- 2 patients in the South Zone
- And no patients in an ICU in Central Zone

As Dr. David Zygun, AHS Edmonton Zone Medical Director explains, we have been prepared to have as many as 200 ICU beds available to care for the sickest Albertans, if needed. Fortunately, we have not come close to requiring that capacity. You can rest assured that ICU beds and expert AHS care teams will always be available for Albertans when they need them.



Continuous Masking and Patient Care

We continue to work to ensure that we are achieving 100 per cent compliance with our Continuous Masking Directive, which requires [all staff, physicians and volunteers](#) to mask in all patient areas at all times, and also to mask in ALL other areas where we cannot maintain a minimum physical distance of two metres or six feet, at all times. We cannot overstate the importance of this directive, and your support in ensuring compliance, both with yourself and your colleagues. Wearing *is* caring. [Who are you wearing your mask to protect?](#)

We also require [all patients](#) and visitors to be masked when leaving any inpatient room to move to other areas in the facility. Masks must cover the nose and mouth.

We understand that staff are experiencing some resistance from some patients regarding the continuous masking requirements. It is imperative that we consider the health of patients, and our duty to provide care, in all circumstances. No patient shall be denied service in AHS because they cannot or will not wear a mask.

To manage these situations safely:

- Screen all patients thoroughly for symptoms of, and risk factors for, COVID-19.
- If patient refuses a mask or is medically exempt:
 - Have the patient clean their hands using alcohol based hand rub.
 - Offer the patient a face shield to don in place of a face mask.
 - Escort the patient to a private care space and apply [contact and droplet precautions](#) until a thorough symptom and risk factor history can be obtained.
- Asymptomatic patients without risk factors can leave their room/care space as long as they can don a face shield.
- Symptomatic patients, or those with risk factors, should not leave their room/care space without a mask, other than in an emergency or medically necessary situation.
 - In this event, the patient should be transported in such a manner as to limit contact with other patients or staff, and the receiving department should be prepared in advance to clear the area of non-essential personnel. Environmental Services should be engaged to ensure appropriate cleaning of surfaces
- Upon discharge, patients who cannot/will not use a face shield or a mask should be escorted off property using a route which is less travelled, and less likely to expose others to disease.

Your continued [example, support and vigilance](#) is appreciated.

Scientific Advisory Group COVID-19 Recommendations

AHS' Scientific Advisory Group (SAG) connects with clinicians, operational leaders, researchers and other experts in reviewing and synthesizing the ever-evolving scientific evidence and national and international guidance to inform best practices in COVID-19 management.

Two new reports by SAG have recently been completed. The first is related to the [risk factors for severe COVID-19 outcomes](#); the other focuses on the [role of children in the transmission of COVID-19 in communities](#). The full reports for these reviews and others are available on the [SAG Recommendations pages](#) at ahs.ca/covid.

Be Well - Be Kind

Resilience, Wellness and Mental Health Supports

While we know things continue to change, we're always here to help you navigate these uncertain times. Remember that there are support services available including our [Life Smart Coaching services](#), which cover a wide range of topics, from child care and parenting services to the [Jumpstart Your Wellness](#) program.

Get the coaching and expert support you need to find strategies for managing health, work and life challenges. Learn more by seeing a full list of [Life Smart Coaching Services](#). There are a number of other supports and resources below:

- [Resilience, Wellness and Mental Health Resource guide](#)
- [Self-Care Tip Sheets](#)
- [Supporting Your Mental Health](#)

Sharing the Love: Thanking our People

Messages of encouragement from those within and outside our organization have often provided the hope and inspiration we've needed at the right moments during these challenging times. These are a sampling of those messages, but we want to thank AHS teams all across the province who are working to protect Albertans in all kinds of ways.

A big thank you to the radiation therapy team at Red Deer Regional Hospital, what a wonderful team of young professionals. Your exceptional care and professionalism was greatly appreciated.
-Micheline LaCroix

I just want to say a huge thank you to all of you on unit 84. You all made my stay amazing and you showed me next level care. You are all great people. You were validating, kind, always willing to chat, you helped keep me motivated and ready for my surgery. I'm so incredibly thankful for everything, I'll never forget any of you on unit 84.

-Alysia LeGrand

Thank you for being so kind and compassionate in your care. I felt so cared for and heard with these technicians in lab and x-ray. Compassion is a good part of healing. I left feeling more hopeful and positive. Thank you.

-Anonymous

If you want to be reminded of how amazing AHS teams are, or how much you are appreciated, take a moment to read other inspiring posts and share some of your own at ahs.ca/sharingthelove.

Wrapping Up



This meme has been circulating on social media and brings a smile to our faces, because it's simply so true. Alberta's students had no idea that spring break would ultimately be the end of their face-to-face 2019-2020 school year. As they embark on a return to school after a lengthy break, the coming weeks will mean another transition in the wake of COVID-19 and more new practices and processes for students. We know that across AHS, many of us will be supporting our children who are uncertain of what managing COVID-19 will mean in their classrooms and hallways. There will be anxiety, mixed with excitement and probably the hope of a return to some part of normalcy with the routines that school brings. It's all part of our new normal in a pandemic that we must figure out how to navigate for the months and years to come.

These continue to be uncertain times and we know that so many of you will be facing some added stress and change with back to school. Make use of the resources AHS has to offer to support you and your families along the way. Recognize that these transitions will be new to kids, parents, teachers and school staff alike. We can help each other through this with the same kind of compassion and creativity we've demonstrated over the past seven + months. We are still in this together.

With gratitude and appreciation,

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 *****

*****For Indigenous Services Canada please email sac.cdemergenciesab-urgencesmtab.isc@canada.ca *****

Forwarded on behalf of the Provincial Indigenous Health Hub