



Gitsegukla Band Council

710 Ray Charles Avenue
Gitsegukla, BC
V0J 2J3
Phone: 250-849-5490

COVID-19 Notice

Before getting to the notice: The symptoms for COVID-19 often appear as a common cold – fever, cough, shortness of breath. If you have symptoms or have had close contact with someone who has been presumed to have or confirmed to have COVID-19, you must call HealthLink BC by dialing 811, to arrange for safe testing. Do not go to the Health Centre or Administration Office and do not go to any other clinics or hospitals in the area, they will not be able to help. Follow the instructions given to you from HealthLink. Next, isolate yourself and refrain from any contact with anyone including family members and friends. Lastly, by phone or messaging inform everyone you have been in contact with in the last 14-days. If you have an emergency always call 911 NOT a Gitsegukla First Responder.

Hello everyone,

We know that the community is concerned with the COVID-19 situation. Its important for the community to know that our number one priority is to ensure the safety of everyone that live and work in Gitsegukla. Therefore, please make sure you read this notice from beginning to end since it provides information about COVID-19, how to protect against it and the plan to protect the community.

Key personnel from the Administration, Health, Education and Public Works departments and First Responders form the Gitsegukla Emergency Response Team (GERT). GERT has developed a collaborative plan to mitigate risk to the community. Our plan is able to evolve and adapt to this ever-changing situation which we are closely monitoring.

The global scientific community and all governments are working together to reduce infection and to develop a vaccine. In Canada, we have the advantage of learning from how COVID-19 spread and how it was treated in countries that were first hit, this is important, since it helps us learn from their mistakes and improve national, provincial and community response plans.

Our plan is guided by information provided by FNHA, Public Health Agency of Canada and BC Ministry of Health. For the time being until COVID-19 passes, we must ALL do our part to help fight against spreading infection. This will require



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changing our routines and daily life choices. Just remember that this is temporary and we will get through this successfully if we all work together.

As part of our plan, the following is effective immediately:

1. Social Assistance (SA) cheques will be mailed out and will reach client mailboxes by Wednesday, March 18 or sooner. Watch for a separate notice with more details.
2. Patient Travel (PT) clients will be advised to defer appointments if possible, especially to the lower mainland. Those that must travel precautionary measures will be discussed with the client.
3. To avoid delays in payment *ALL SA and PT clients* that currently do not have a bank account or have not provided Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) information are strongly encouraged to open a bank account and provide EFT info to the SA or Health Departments ASAP.
4. The Good Food Box will be boxed by staff only in the gym, no volunteers required and will be delivered to each household on Monday. So please be patient since delivery will go into the evening.
5. Our staff can't provide essential services if they are infected or sick. Therefore, all staff will be required to take all precautionary measures to ensure they are doing what is necessary to reduce the risk of infecting fellow staff and community members. This includes social distancing of at least 10-12 ft, wearing appropriate hand, body and face protection and staying home if they are sick.
6. Community members that have enquiries or would like to make an appointment are strongly urged to call the respective departments instead of physically going to the facility. Again, this is to protect you and staff. Note, at times the phone lines may be busy, please call back. Your understanding and patience are appreciated.



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7. All community-wide events including sports activities & social gatherings and workshops are postponed until further notice. This includes the Specific Claims Meeting on April 2nd and Independence Day Celebrations on April 6th.
8. All non-essential health services at the Health Centre will be deferred on a case-by-case basis. All clients that are affected will be notified.
9. Warm, Safe and Dry renovation schedules may be modified. More information to follow.
10. The school and gym will be closed during spring break to allow staff to do regular maintenance and to thoroughly disinfect all areas of the school and gym.
11. Cleaning and disinfecting the Health Centre, School and Administration buildings will be increased by more detailed and frequent cleaning.
12. We will provide clear and accurate information on COVID-19: What is it? How can you protect yourself? How can you prepare?, and Where can you find reliable information? This information is in this notice but watch for more detailed information to follow.
13. Daily communications to update community with the status of COVID-19 in Canada and most importantly in our area and village.

More information and measures will be available and implemented as the situation changes.



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Current Situation

The following information is from Public Health Agency of Canada and BC Ministry of Health and is valid at the time of writing this notice.

Area	Confirmed cases	Probable cases
Gitsegukla	0	0
Northern Health Region	2	0
Province of BC	73	0
Canada	244	5

Of these cases:

- Onset of illnesses occurred between January 17 and March 9, 2020
- 50% of cases are female
- 29% of cases are 60 years old and over
- 12% of cases have been hospitalized
- 1 person has died of COVID-19
- 79% of cases are travellers and 8% are close contacts of travellers

Health and Government Advisories

As you know the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID -19 a pandemic (for more info go to [WHO declaring COVID-19 a pandemic](#)). While the risk to indigenous communities in northern British Columbia from COVID-19 continues to be low, the threat is being taken seriously by Gitsegukla Council and Administration, thus the formation of GERT. The First Nations Health Authority is working with our provincial partners and the Public Health Agency of Canada to actively monitor the situation. Protocols are in place to screen for infections in any returning international travelers and follow up on any identified cases. The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to reassure Canadians that our public health system is well positioned to identify and manage any additional cases.

GERT reviews and follows the guidance of FNHA, the Public Health Agency of Canada and BC Ministry of Health and their recommendations, which are:

- Advising against all non-essential travel outside of Canada, including to the United States.



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- All events larger than 250 people are to be cancelled. This includes indoor and outdoor sporting events, conferences, meetings, religious gatherings or other similar events. We have opted to cancel all community-wide events as mentioned in our plan.
 - If you have symptoms and may have been exposed to COVID-19, you must call HealthLink BC at 811, to arrange for safe testing.

The situation is evolving, and we will continue to provide updates.

Reliable and Accurate Sources of COVID-19 Information & Updates

We ask everyone to continue to take preventative steps, such as regular hand washing to reduce your risk of infection and the best course of action if you are worried is to get information from reliable sources and don't rely on hearsay or rumors. The most reliable sources that we follow and recommend to you are:

- First Nations Health Authority (FNHA): <https://www.fnha.ca>
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
- BC Centre for Disease Control Webpage [http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-\(novel\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-(novel))
- World Health Organization (WHO): <https://www.who.int/>

COVID-19 Symptoms and Prevention

Symptoms

COVID-19 causes a respiratory disease that has similar symptoms to other respiratory illnesses, including fever, dry cough, sore throat and headache. The virus is spread by droplets produced when a person with the infection coughs or sneezes.



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Protect yourself and others

We are reminding everyone to take the following measures, which can also protect against other respiratory illnesses such as influenza:

- Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth.
- Maintain a distance of 9-12 feet between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- When coughing or sneezing cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue.
- Stay home when sick

Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene refers to hand washing, or hand sanitizing and actions taken to maintain healthy hands and fingernails. It should be performed frequently with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds:

- Before and after preparing food;
- Before and after eating;
- After using the toilet;
- Before and after using a surgical/procedure mask
- After disposing of waste or handling contaminated laundry;
- Whenever hands look dirty.

Steps to ensure proper hand washing

- Step 1. Wet hands with warm water.
- Step 2. Apply soap.
- Step 3. Wash hands for at least 20 seconds (including your palms, back of each hand, between fingers, thumbs and under nails).
- Step 4. Rinse well.
- Step 5. Dry hands well with paper towel.
- Step 6. Turn off tap using paper towel.



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Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) containing at least 60% alcohol can be used for hand hygiene if soap and water is not available. However, if hands are visibly soiled, hand wipes should be used to remove any such soil or organic material; this should then be followed by the use of ABHS.

Respiratory etiquette

Respiratory etiquette describes a combination of measures intended to minimize the dispersion of respiratory droplets when coughing, sneezing and talking.

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a surgical/procedure mask or tissue. Dispose of tissues in a lined waste container and perform hand hygiene immediately after a cough or sneeze OR
- Cough/sneeze into the band of your arm, not your hand

Avoid contact with other people, if you are sick

- If you are sick avoid being in close proximity (within 3 metres) of other people, including household members and visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home, with the exception of individuals providing care or delivering supplies or food.
- When interactions within 3 metres are unavoidable, these should be as brief as possible, and you should wear a surgical/procedure mask. If possible, you or your caregiver should arrange to have supplies dropped off at their front door to minimize direct contact. If you must leave the home setting, a surgical/procedure mask should be worn

Avoid Sharing Personal Household Items

Do not share personal items with others, such as toothbrushes, towels, washcloths, bed linen, cigarettes, unwashed eating utensils, drinks, phones, computers, or other electronic devices.

Clean all high-touch surfaces



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High-touch areas such as toilets, bedside tables and door handles should be cleaned daily using a bleach solution (0.5% sodium hypochlorite). If they can withstand the use of liquids for disinfection, high-touch electronics such as phones, computers and other devices may be disinfected with 70% alcohol (e.g. alcohol prep wipes). Disinfectants can kill the virus making it no longer possible to infect people. Disposable gloves should be used when cleaning or handling surfaces, clothing, or linen soiled with body fluids. Co-living settings where ill persons are convalescing should be cleaned and disinfected daily. All used disposable contaminated items should be placed in a lined container before disposing of them with another household waste.

Stay tuned for more information and updates

This message is from the Gitsegukla Chief and Council

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