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# COVID-19 info for Albertans

Actions to protect Albertans and prevent the spread of novel coronavirus.

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## Current situation

The COVID-19 outbreak was declared a global pandemic by World Health Organization (WHO). Alberta [declared a public health emergency](#) ↓, on March 17.

Confirmed cases: 195 in Alberta, 846 in Canada.

- [Complete information for Albertans](#)
- [Updates from the Chief Medical Officer](#)

*Last updated: March 20 at 3:30 pm*



If you recently returned from travel outside Canada or have symptoms - cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing:

- stay home – do not go to an ER or clinic
- take the [COVID-19 self-assessment test](#)
- call [Health Link 811](#) for testing and instructions

## What's new

- [New measures to protect residents of seniors' facilities](#)
- [Immediate economic relief for the energy sector](#)
- [Economic Recovery Council gets to work](#)
- [Reminder to help prevent the spread and practice social distancing](#)
- [Tips on how to self-isolate](#)

## Cases in Alberta

Alberta is taking aggressive measures to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Additional actions may be required in the coming days. The health of Albertans is, and always will be, our top priority.

Location	Confirmed cases (Mar. 20)	Deaths
In Canada	846	10
In Alberta	195 (49 new)	1

Aggregate data on COVID-19 cases and laboratory testing in Alberta is now available. This includes age range, sex, geographical area and AHS zone of cases.

[View all case and testing data](#) →

## Prevent and prepare

Alberta implemented measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including new restrictions on mass gatherings. Find tips to prepare your household in case you need to self-isolate at home.



- [Help Prevent the Spread posters](#)

## Mass gathering restrictions

New public health measures are in place to limit the time Albertans spend in large crowds and crowded spaces:

- All events over 50 people should be cancelled
- Recreation and private entertainment facilities
- Sit-down restaurants and others can remain open at a lower capacity

[View all mass gathering restrictions](#) →

*Last updated: March 20 at 5 pm*

## Help prevent the spread

All Albertans have a responsibility to [help prevent the spread](#). Take steps to protect yourself and others:

- practice [social distancing](#)
- stay home and away from others if sick or in isolation
- practice good hygiene: wash hands often, cover coughs and sneezes, and avoid touching face
- monitor for symptoms: cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing
- take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#)

[Learn more ways to prevent the spread](#) →

*Last updated: March 20 at 5 pm*

## How to self-isolate

Self-isolation can help prevent the spread of COVID-19. If you're asked to self-isolate, follow these guidelines:

- stay home - do not attend work, social events or any other public gatherings
- avoid close contact with other people – especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems
- monitor for symptoms like a dry cough, fever, fatigue or difficulty breathing

Learn how to self-isolate and prepare →

*Last updated: March 18 at 7:30 pm*

## Alberta government response

### Alberta government actions

- March 20 - Alberta announced new measures to address the economic downturn, including:
  - providing immediate [relief for the energy sector](#)
  - establishing an [Economic Recovery Council](#)
- March 18 - Alberta announced immediate financial assistance for Albertans affected by COVID-19 pandemic, including:
  - [emergency isolation support](#) for working Albertans who must self-isolate
  - 90-day utility payment deferral for residential and business customers
  - 6-month student loan repayment deferral
  - corporate income tax changes and other [supports for employers](#)
- March 17 – Alberta declared a state of emergency under the [Public Health Act](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> to empower authorities to more effectively respond to public health concerns.
- March 17 – \$60 million in one-time emergency funding was provided to civil society organizations, adult homeless shelters, and women's emergency shelters to:
  - enable social distancing and sanitization of common areas
  - provide supports and services to at-risk seniors, people with disabilities and families facing homelessness, poverty and social isolation
- March 15 – \$500 million in additional health funding was commitment to the COVID-19 response to ensure front-line health professionals have the tools they need for testing, surveillance and treatment of patients.

### Public health actions

Alberta's public health officials are carefully monitoring the situation in Canada and around the world, and are ready to respond. They are:

- working closely with federal, provincial and territorial partners to share information and assess potential health risks
- ensuring our health system is responding effectively
- ensuring front-line health professionals have information about the virus so they can:
  - take recommended actions
  - promptly report potential cases to public health officials
- updating self-isolation and self-monitoring recommendations for returning travellers as required
- tracing all close contacts of confirmed cases, testing and isolating those who are symptomatic, and asking even those who feel well to self-isolate for 14 days after their last contact with the case

*Last updated: March 20 at 8 pm*

## Symptoms and risks

COVID-19 can cause serious respiratory illness. Because it is a new virus with no treatment or immunity in people, it is critical for people with symptoms to stay home and away from others to keep it from spreading.

### COVID-19 vs. Influenza

#### Coronaviruses

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild common colds to severe illnesses.

Novel coronaviruses, like COVID-19, are new strains of the virus that have not been previously identified in humans. This means people have no immunity against it, and it has no specific vaccine or treatment.

#### COVID-19 vs. Flu

In some ways, COVID-19 is similar to influenza (also known as the flu), but there are also key differences.

##### Similarities

- Both cause respiratory disease
- Both are spread by small droplets from the nose and mouth
- Both are not spread through the air over long distances and times, unlike the measles

##### Differences

- COVID-19 does not appear to transmit as efficiently as influenza:
  - only people with symptoms seem to be spreading the disease

- only people with symptoms seem to be spreading the disease
- controlling its spread is possible when people with symptoms are isolated
- There is no specific vaccine or treatment for COVID-19.
- COVID-19 causes severe disease and mortality in more cases than the flu. On average:
  - COVID-19 has resulted in 1 to 2 deaths per 100 cases
  - Flu results in 1 death in every 1,000 flu cases

Because COVID-19 can cause serious illness, it is critical to keep it from spreading by having people with a symptoms stay home, away from others.

*Last updated: March 15 at 5 pm*

## How it spreads

COVID-19 is transmitted through person-to-person spread by:

- larger droplets, like from a cough or sneeze
- touching contaminated objects or surfaces, then touching your eyes, nose or mouth

COVID-19 is not airborne and cannot spread through the air over long distances or times, like the measles.

Studies suggest that the virus generally only survives for a few hours on a surface, though it may be possible for it to survive several days under ideal conditions.

*Last updated: March 15 at 5 pm*


## Symptoms

### Symptoms

COVID-19 symptoms are similar to influenza and other respiratory illnesses.

- Common symptoms include: dry cough, fever or fatigue/extreme tiredness
- Symptom of serious illness include: difficulty breathing or pneumonia

If you have symptoms:

- stay home - do not go to an ER or clinic
- take the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#)  to determine next steps and find out if you require testing
- call 911 if you need immediate medical attention and inform them you may have COVID-19

### Risks

Most people – about 80% – recover without needing special treatment. However, it can cause serious illness in some, and there is a risk of death in severe cases.

While we are still learning about COVID-19, serious illness appears to develop more often in people who are older or have pre-existing conditions, such as: high blood pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes.

*Last updated: March 20 at 8pm*

## Treatment

There is no specific vaccine for COVID-19 at this time. The virus is new and different, so needs its own vaccine – which researchers around the world are now working to develop.

Supportive care is being used to treat patients with COVID-19 and some medications are being tested to see if they can help severely ill patients.

If you suspect you might have COVID-19, complete an [online COVID-19 self-assessment](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> to determine next steps and find out if testing is required.

For other health-related concerns, consult your health care provider.

*Last updated: March 16 at 5 pm*

## Mental health and family violence

### Mental health

The COVID-19 pandemic can have a significant impact on Albertans' mental health.

Resources are available if you, or someone you know, is struggling or needs a little extra support, advice on handling stressful situation, or ways to talk to children.

- [Mental health and coping with COVID-19](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> (CDC)
- [Talking with children about COVID-19](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> (CDC)
- [Help in Tough Times](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> (AHS)

### Family violence

If you or someone you know is at risk of family violence, help is available.

- Call our 24-hour Family Violence Info Line at 310-1818 to get anonymous help in over 170 languages.
- [Find information on shelter and financial supports](#)
- [Learn how to recognize and prevent family violence](#)

## Info for Albertans

Effective March 12, all travellers returning from outside Canada must self-isolate for 14 days and monitor for

symptoms.

## Supports for employers and employees

Measures are in place to protect businesses, employers and employees from the economic disruption of COVID-19, including:

- Financial relief for businesses and employers
- Job-protected leave for employees
- Federal employment insurance benefits
- Business continuity planning resources
- Utility payment deferral

[Go to COVID-19 supports for employers and employees →](#)


*Last updated: March 18 at 5:50 pm*

## Info for travellers and airline passengers

*Last updated: March 18*

An official global travel advisory is in effect. Albertans should follow all travel recommendations.

- Avoid all non-essential travel outside Canada and all cruise ship travel.
- Canadians abroad should return home immediately.
- Returning travellers should:
  - follow self-isolation guidelines and monitor for symptoms for 14 days
  - check recent domestic and international flights for confirmed cases (info updated as cases are confirmed)

[View all travel advice](#)  


## Info for seniors \*NEW

Individuals over 60 years of age and those with pre-existing health conditions are most at risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19.

To prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, among seniors and vulnerable groups:

- Visitors to any continuing care or long-term care facility in Alberta are limited to a single individual designated by the resident or guardian.



- Each essential visitor must be verified and undergo a health screening prior to entering the facility. This may include a temperature check or a questionnaire.
- Facilities must have security staff or a greeter to conduct this screening and verify the visitor is designated.
- Exceptions to these essential visitor rules will be made for family members to visit a person who is dying, so long as only one visitor enters the facility at a time.

*Last updated: March 20 at 3:30 pm*

## Info for daycares \*NEW

### Licensed child care

- All licensed child care facilities in Alberta are closed at this time. This includes daycare, out-of-school care and preschool programs.

### Child care for core service workers

- Select licensed child care centres will begin reopening to provide child care for core service workers.
  - Access will be prioritized to health care practitioners and critical infrastructure workers.
  - Additional space will then be available to first responders and others.
- Children's Services will contact the centres that will be reopening directly.
  - Centres will initially be chosen based on proximity to health care facilities and will be reopened in phases based on areas of need, starting March 23.
- Parents will be notified by their employer if they qualify to send their children to newly re-opened centres.

### Home-based child care

- Approved family day homes are exempt as they care for fewer than 7 children at a time, but should use enhanced sanitation practices.
- Private home-based child care providers remain open as they can only care for up to six children, not including their own, at any one time.
- Government does not monitor private child care providers but can issue closures if they are over this limit.
- Any home-based child care provider – approved or private – should routinely clean and disinfect surfaces that people regularly touch like toys, door handles, keyboards, toilets and tables.
- Visitors and children should not enter if they are feeling unwell.
- Regardless of where a child is being taken care of (family, friends or day home) handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer must be available to children, and visitors are encouraged to wash their hands frequently.
- While grandparents and other seniors are a great help with child care, older Albertans have an

increased risk of complications if they get COVID-19. We encourage limiting exposure to children who have any signs of illness.

- Parents should take precautions and limit the number of playdates to reduce the chances of community transfer.

## Resources

- [Record of decision by the chief medical officer of health](#) ↓, (PDF, 110 KB)

*Last updated: March 20 at 7pm*

### Info for schools \*NEW

- All Classes in K to 12 schools are cancelled until further notice
- All Grade 6 and 9 provincial achievement tests and grade 12 diploma exams are cancelled
- School authorities will offer at-home learning opportunities for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students
- Each student will get final grades and a report card appropriate to their grade level
- High school students on track to receive 100 or more credits will still be eligible to graduate

Student learning during COVID-19 →

## Resources

- [Record of decision by the chief medical officer of health](#) ↓, (PDF, 110 KB)

*Last updated: March 20 at 7pm*

### Info for post-secondary institutions

Effective immediately, in-person classes at post-secondary institutions are cancelled until further notice. Campuses remain open.

We are working with post-secondary institutions to ensure that these extraordinary circumstances do not prevent students from being eligible for admission to post-secondary studies for the upcoming school year.

Resources:

- [Record of decision by the chief medical officer of health](#) ↓, (PDF, 110 KB)

*Last updated: March 15 at 5 pm*

### Info for municipalities

*Last updated: March 15 at 5 pm*

We are providing advice based on current evidence and [public health recommendations](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## Helping local organizations plan for an outbreak

- [Business continuity planning](#) <sup>[↓]</sup> (PDF, 319 KB) is essential in preparing critical operations for potential interruptions.
- [Alberta Emergency Management Agency](#) field officers are available to support municipalities, First Nations and Metis Settlements with their emergency management and business continuity planning.

## Supporting the health system

Communities should:

- refer anyone with health-related concerns to [Health Link 811](#) <sup>[↗]</sup> and promote it as a reliable source of information
- promote the [Respiratory Viruses and the Workplace guide for workplaces](#) <sup>[↗]</sup>
- review business continuity plans to ensure disruptions from staff shortages have been considered, especially for critical operations
- stay informed about the current situation in Alberta via this web page

## Resources

- [OHS: Respiratory viruses and the workplace](#) <sup>[↗]</sup>
- [Business continuity planning](#) <sup>[↓]</sup> (PDF, 319 KB)
- [Help Prevent the Spread posters](#) <sup>[↗]</sup>

### Info for homeless shelters and service providers

We are working with community-based organizations, homeless shelters and women's shelters to:

- update pandemic plans with guidelines and information specific to COVID-19
- expand shelter capacity and help current service providers to maintain social distancing practices by finding additional space to house people.

\$60 million has been committed to municipalities, charitable and non-profit organizations for social services support, including:

- adult homeless shelters
- women's emergency shelters
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program

Civil society organizations are encouraged to connect with their local Family, Community and Social Services program regarding available supports within grant guidelines.

More information about how to request funding for emergency shelters and supportive housing programs will be available soon.

#### Resource

- [Guidance for Providers of Services to Albertans Experiencing \(or at-risk of\) Homelessness](#) ↓ (PDF, 647 KB)

*Last updated: March 20 at 8pm*

## Government service changes

### Road tests, driver's licence, ID cards and vehicle registration changes

Upcoming expiry dates for Alberta drivers' licences, identification cards, vehicle registrations, other permits and certificates are being extended until May 15.

#### Vehicle registration

Vehicle registrations expire on an assigned month based on the registrant's surname or a company name.

- Albertans and companies with registrations expiring in March and April (including those whose last names begin with B, D, G, Y) will now have until May 15, 2020 to renew their vehicle registrations.

#### Driver's licences and ID cards

Driver's licences and ID cards expire on the holder's birthday in the year noted on the card.

- Albertans who have birthdays from March 17 through May 14 and whose cards expire this year, now have until May 15, 2020 to renew.
- Expiry dates can be found on your card and Albertans with birthdays from March 17 through May 14 are encouraged to confirm whether or not they need to renew this year.

#### Road tests

Effective March 20, Alberta commercial and passenger road tests have been suspended for at least 4 weeks. Road tests will resume when it is safe to do so.

- Albertans who have a road test scheduled will be able to rebook online as of April 17, 2020 for a test on April 20, 2020 or later, at no additional charge.
- We are working with the commercial carrier industry to determine whether there are any urgent driving tests that need to be held in order to support maintaining delivery of essential goods, such as food and medical supplies.

### Court and justice services changes

The Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, the Provincial Court of Alberta and the Alberta Court of Appeal are

limiting services to essential and urgent functions.

## Alberta Court of Queen's Bench

Alberta's Court of Queen's Bench has suspended all jury trials scheduled between March 16 and May 31. Jurors summoned to attend jury selection during this time are released and don't need to attend.

Current jury trials are proceeding, jurors for these trials must report to court. Crown prosecutors and defense counsel in all cases have been notified.

Hearings are limited to emergency or urgent matters only. Emergency matters are those in which serious consequences to persons or harm to property may arise if the hearing does not proceed, or if there is a risk of loss of jurisdiction or expiration of an existing protection or restraining order.

Any counsel or juror showing symptoms should contact the court to seek instructions from the judge presiding over their case.

Find more [Alberta Court of Queen's Bench information](#).

## Provincial Court of Alberta

The Provincial Court of Alberta is limiting all regular operations until further notice.

Effective March 17:

- All Traffic Courts are closed
- You do not need to attend unless the matter is an in-custody, urgent criminal matter, or urgent family or child protection matter
- No members of the public are permitted unless they are required (i.e. counsel, parties, witnesses, media)

Find more [Provincial Court of Alberta information](#).

## Alberta Court of Appeal

Only people necessary (counsel, litigants, and media) should attend court. No one who is ill or experiencing any COVID-19 related symptoms should attend.

Filing deadlines have not changed. The court remains available to consider requests for extensions, fiats and other administrative directions.

Parties and counsel are encouraged to provide the Registry with an email address if they have not already done so. At this time, correspondence from and to this court may be sent by email instead of fax.

The Court of Appeal Registry is operating on social distancing guidelines posted at the Court of Appeal Registry counters.

Find more [Alberta Court of Appeal information](#).

# Chief Medical Officer updates

Daily updates from Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

## Transcripts

- [March 20, 2020](#)
- [March 19, 2020](#)
- [March 18, 2020](#)
- [March 17, 2020](#)
- [March 16, 2020](#)
- [March 15, 2020](#)
- [March 14, 2020](#)
- [March 13, 2020](#)

## Protecting families and the economy





### [Student learning during COVID-19](#)

Guidelines for continuing K to 12 student learning while in-school classes are cancelled due to COVID-19.



### [Relief for the energy sector](#)

Immediate action will protect jobs and provide economic relief to the oil and gas industry.





## [Economic Recovery Council](#)

Providing expert advice to guide Alberta through the economic downturn as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the energy price crash.

## Resources



- [Help Prevent the Spread Posters](#)
- [Alberta Health Services \(AHS\) COVID-19 updates](#)
- Government of Canada COVID-19 updates: [English](#) | [Simplified Chinese](#) | [French](#)
- [World Health Organization COVID-19 updates](#)



# News

## Situation updates

- [Update 6: COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta](#) (March 19)
- [Update 5: COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta](#) (March 18)
- [Update 4: COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta](#) (March 17)
- [Update 3: COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta](#) (March 16)
- [Update 2: COVID-19 pandemic in Alberta](#) (March 15)
- [Update 1: COVID-19 in Alberta](#) (March 14)

## News releases

- [Emergency management amendment to address COVID-19](#) (March 20, 2020)
- [Economic Recovery Council gets to work](#) (March 20, 2020)
- [Protecting jobs, providing economic relief for energy sector](#) (March 20, 2020)
- [Continuing student learning](#) (March 20, 2020)
- [Pharmacists to assess Albertans for COVID-19, manage drug supply](#) (March 19, 2020)
- [New app helps Albertans access health care](#) (March 19, 2020)
- [Protecting Alberta's families and economy](#) (March 18, 2020)
- [New measures to limit COVID-19 in Alberta](#) (March 17, 2020)
- [\\$500 million committed to COVID-19 response](#) (March 15, 2020)

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