



June 16 CLBC Teleconference for Self Advocates Plain Language Summary

This teleconference focused on health questions related to COVID-19 that were submitted specifically from individuals served by CLBC and the BC Self Advocacy community.

Who were the speakers on this call?

- Dr. Daniele Behn Smith, Deputy Provincial Health Officer
- Ross Chilton, CEO, Community Living BC

Question: How many people get COVID-19?

Answer:

- Approximately 8 million people have tested positive for COVID-19 around the world so far.
- As of June 12th, close to 27,000 people have tested positive for COVID-19 in BC.
- The [John Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#) website is a good place to go to for information and updates about COVID-19.

Where did the COVID-19 come from?

Answer:

- COVID-19 started from a virus called SARS-CoV-2 that came from Wuhan, China, in late 2019.
- It is a virus that is brand new to humans.
- COVID-19 became a global pandemic because of how fast it spread to humans all around the world.

Question: How long will COVID-19 go on for?

Answer:

- COVID-19 will go on for as long as it takes for our human immune system to learn about the virus and know how to respond to it.
- This is a new virus for humans. None of our bodies have seen this virus before.
- This is different from a common cold virus that has been around humans for a long time.
- There are 2 things that will stop COVID-19 from spreading so quickly around the world:
 1. For people to get COVID-19 and for our immune systems to learn how to recognize and respond to the virus.
 2. For scientists to create a vaccine, or injection, that introduces a tiny bit of the virus for the human system to learn how to protect itself from COVID-19.
- No one has exact answers right now, but our best guess is that it will take 1-2 years to develop and make a vaccine that everyone has access to.

Question: When can we go for a walk outside with family members?

Answer:

- You can go for walks outside with family members now.
- Outside is a good place to visit with family and friends because it's easier to keep a distance between each other, and because COVID-19 doesn't survive very well outside.

Question: When can I go shopping or for a short drive with family?

Answer:

- Most people can safely do those things now, as long as we are following these important health measures:
 1. Stay home and away from others if you are sick.

2. Keep a 2-meter distance (2 adult arm lengths) from people you don't live with.
 3. Do lots of cleaning of things you touch often like counters, door handles and light switches.
 4. Wash your hands often.
- Understanding how COVID-19 virus spreads can help you make decisions about the things you can do safely.
 - COVID-19 spreads through infected droplets in 2 ways:
 1. If you are standing close enough to someone who has COVID-19 and they cough or sneeze, their infected droplets can travel and get inhaled by you and make you sick.
 2. The other way COVID-19 is spread is when someone who is sick coughs into their hand, then touches something like a doorknob or light switch and then you touch that same doorknob and then touch your nose or eyes or mouth.
 - It's also important to think about your own risk level of getting severe COVID-19.
 - People who are aged 65 and older, and those who have health issues like heart, lung and immune system conditions are at higher risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.
 - If you are an older person who has health issues, then it is recommended that you stay close to home and limit the number of people you come into contact with.
 - If you aren't sure of your risk of getting severe COVID-19, then it's a good idea to call your doctor and it talk through.
 - As BC services and businesses open back up, they will be following the health and safety rules. Things like plexiglass barriers and strips of tape on the floor to keep our distance from each other, will help keep the risk of spreading the virus low.

Question: Many people can't wear a mask. Do we have to wear them? BC ferries and BC transit are asking us to- can they refuse us access if we don't wear a mask?

Answer:

- NO. No one should be refused access because they can't wear a mask.
- We want to know if people are being discriminated against for not wearing a mask.
- Wearing masks don't protect people from getting COVID-19.
- If you have the virus, wearing a mask would keep from you spreading infected droplets to others.
- Hand washing and physical distancing is much better at stopping the spread of COVID-19.
- Masks are recommended in situations if you can't stay 2-meters away from other people. But they are not required.
- If you choose to wear a mask it's really important to wash your hands before you put the mask on and after you take it off.

Question: Many of us are afraid of the Second Wave. What can we do to prepare? How will we know it's here?

Answer:

- A second wave is when the number of people getting COVID-19 goes up.
- A second wave is expected in the fall/winter months when it is regular cold and flu season.
- Viruses spread easier in the winter months because we are inside and closer together more often.
- We will know the second wave is coming when the numbers start climbing again.
- Public health leaders are looking out for you by testing people and watching the numbers everyday.
- It's important if you feel sick to make sure to get tested for COVID-19. This will help the health leaders keep track of the numbers and know if a second

wave of COVID-19 is coming. In some cases, you can be tested for COVID-19 in your home.

- Listen to the regular media briefings so you know what is happening in your area.
- If public health officials see numbers climbing, then we will speak out to the public and let you know what you need to do.
- BC has done a very good job compared to other parts of Canada and the world to stop the numbers of COVID-19 from going up.
- Health leaders are feeling positive that we know more about COVID-19 and how to keep people safe if there is a second wave.

Question: When can we go to places like the dentist or get our hearing aids tested? I heard you can't go the dentist if you have diabetes. Is that true? Where can I go for up to date information?

Answer:

- People with diabetes can go to the dentist.
- Services like dentists and hearing clinics are opening back up at their own pace so they can follow Work Safe BC guidelines to keep the risk of COVID-19 low.
- You can always call ahead to ask questions and find out what to expect when you get there.
- All businesses have to post a safety plan so the public knows exactly what is being done to keep the risk of spreading COVID-19 low.
- If you are worried about your own risk of getting COVID-19 you should talk to your doctor for advice.
- There is a lot of information out there. It is new to everyone and we are learning something new about COVID-19 everyday.
- The [Work Safe BC](#) website can give you information about what businesses have to do to open safely.
- The [BC Center for Disease Control](#) website can give you all the up to date information on COVID-19 in BC and has helpful pages on how to access testing and answers to your question.

- Remember, don't be afraid to access emergency health or everyday health care needs. There are safe ways to access services for your health and wellness.

Question: Why is there not enough PPE like masks and gloves and hand sanitizer in BC?

Answer:

- There is not enough personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves because every part of the world is affected by COVID-19.
- The demand for PPE is more than we have.
- BC has worked really hard to increase the supply coming into the province, but it's been hard.

Question: Elders have been at high risk of getting COVID-19 when they live in long-term care facilities. Are there the same kind of risks for people who live in group homes or home share settings?

Answer:

- No. The risk of getting COVID-19 is much lower in group homes and home share compared to long-term care facilities.
- Remember, the risk of getting COVID-19 goes down with lower numbers of people you are in contact with AND for the amount of time and how close you are in contact with those people.
- Long-term care facilities can have between 100-200 people living in them with many different staff coming and going and the need for very direct personal contact.
- Group homes have much less people- between 4-10 people- with a limited number of staff coming and going.
- Also, older people are more at risk. 85 years is the average age of people who have died from COVID-19.