

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN

A communicable disease is an illness caused by viruses or bacteria that can be transmitted from one person to another through a variety of ways including contact with blood and bodily fluids or a contaminated surface, breathing in an airborne virus, contaminated water/food, or from an insect bite. Examples include, but not limited to, COVID-19, norovirus, seasonal flu, measles, tuberculosis.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction to employees and students in response to any communicable diseases that may threaten the College community. This is in alignment with the [BC Centre for Disease Control, the Public Health Guidance for Post-Secondary Institutions](#) and [WSBC requirements](#) as we transition from COVID-19 safety measures to general communicable disease prevention measures guided by the Provincial Health Office (PHO).

College of the Rockies' goal is to promote the health and safety of employees, students and visitors by providing information that can be used to prevent the contraction and spread of communicable diseases. We will work with the National and Provincial Health Authorities in the event of an outbreak occurring at the College and its campuses, plus conform to the regulations for communicable disease control as set by the authorities.

UNDERSTAND THE RISK

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time, or occur on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the means of transmission is the first step in reducing the incidence of these diseases. Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever and other flu-like symptoms: aches, upset stomach, fatigue, fever, and headaches. When traveling abroad, be aware of communicable disease threats; certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world. The [Travel Advice and Advisories](#) are the government of Canada's official source of destination-specific travel information.

The College's COVID-19 Safety Task Force, the Occupational Health and Safety Committee (OH&S) and President's Council will work together to help monitor and review all PHO communicable disease-related information on an on-going basis.

PREVENT or CONTROL RISK

We will ensure that all proper supplies, materials and identified work measures are in place for all employees and students to control and prevent communicable diseases. Such supplies may include, but not limited to, sanitation wipes, masks, shields, barriers.

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of transmission in the workplace. Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, and such can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases.

Not all communicable diseases are treatable, nor are current treatments guaranteed to protect against them. Therefore, it is important to limit the spread of communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness/disease by implementing these ongoing measures:

- Continue to do a daily health self-assessment using [BC Thrive](#).
- [Wash your hands](#) or use hand sanitizer frequently, this is one of the most simple and effective ways to minimize the spread of communicable diseases. Common day-to-day activities such as shaking hands, touching common surfaces and direct contact with infected individuals will increase your risk of infection.
- For all indoor and outdoor activities have hand sanitizer readily available.
- Use proper cough/sneeze etiquette by [covering your mouth and nose](#).
- Practice a healthy lifestyle; exercise, eat a balanced diet and get sufficient sleep.
- If you are sick, stay home. The BC Centre for disease control poster at the end of this plan may help with assessing your symptoms.
- The College will maintain a clean environment through routine cleaning practices and disinfecting surfaces.
- Areas which may have specialized cleaning practices due to their activities or regulatory requirements (e.g. labs, clinics, food service areas, event planners) will continue to follow their cleaning practices in addition to any other requirements that may still be in place from the PHO.
- We strongly encourage appropriate vaccinations and immunizations.
- [Wear a mask](#):
 - to slow the spread of COVID-19 and any communicable disease
 - in areas where it may be required by PHO (i.e. health practice education)
 - upon any changing recommendations by PHO or mandated by the College
- Respect people's personal space as everyone moves forward at their own pace.
- Physical distancing and limiting close interactions can help prevent the spread of infections, and physical barriers may also be used where required to help prevent the spread of respiratory droplets.
- Facilities Management will assess building HVAC systems on an ongoing basis to ensure they continue to meet WSBC and ASHRAE requirements.

RESPOND

In addition to maintaining the ongoing preventative measures, the College will monitor public health information and be responsive to any further directives from the PHO. Any changes during periods of elevated risk, the PHO will provide guidance and information about the risk and how to reduce it.

The following procedures should be followed whenever there is a potential risk of a communicable disease.

EMPLOYEES/STUDENTS

If you are diagnosed or suspect you have a communicable disease:

- Stay home and avoid close contact with others if contagious
- Ensure symptoms have passed before you return
- Notify your supervisor/instructor of your absence and seek further guidance on working/studying at home or sick days
- Consult BC Thrive or 811 to see if you should be tested or seek medical attention if necessary
- Take all precautions to limit the spread of communicable diseases, including traveling when sick unless deemed appropriate by a health care professional
- Getting vaccinated is important, the College encourages vaccination, when possible, as a way to protect yourself and others. Learn more about the benefits of vaccinations on [Immunize BC](#)
- During pandemics or when required, you may be asked to follow [suspect or confirmed case](#) on campus procedures

CONFIDENTIALITY

In pursuant to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, College of the Rockies will take all reasonable steps to protect the privacy of individuals who have communicable diseases. In administering this plan, we will not disclose the identity of any individual who has a communicable disease, except as authorized or required by law. We may be required to disclose personal information if there is a risk of significant harm to the health and safety of the public, a group of people or if requested by the medical health officer or designate under the Public Health Act.

COMMUNICATION and MONITORING

The College's COVID-19 Safety Task Force, the OH&S Committee and President's Council will work together to help monitor and review all PHO communicable disease-related information.

- This plan will be available on our website and sharepoint
- Leaders should ensure everyone on their teams have reviewed the plan
- Prevention measures will be reinforced through signage and other tools

- Individuals should report any health and safety concerns to their supervisor or the OH&S committee

RESOURCES

For additional information about a specific communicable disease including symptoms, prevention, treatment, and communicable disease outbreak, please visit the following:

[BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual](#)

[Interior Health Communicable Disease Control and Prevention](#)

COVID-19

When to get tested for COVID-19

Based on current evidence, some symptoms are more likely to be related to COVID-19 than others.

If you or your child have any of the symptoms listed below, follow the instructions.

SYMPTOMS		WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever (above 38° C) Chills Cough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loss of sense of smell or taste Difficulty breathing 	<p>1 or more of these symptoms: Get tested and stay home.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sore throat Loss of appetite Headache Body aches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme fatigue or tiredness Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea 	<p>If you have 1 symptom: Stay home until you feel better.</p> <p>2 or more of these symptoms: Stay home and wait 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours.</p>
<p>If you are a close contact* of someone who has COVID-19 and have any of the symptoms listed above: Get tested and stay home.</p>		
<p>Check your symptoms with the B.C. Self-Assessment Tool. If you have any questions, or the symptoms get worse, contact your healthcare provider or call 8-1-1.</p>		

* You will be notified if you are a close contact. For more information on close contacts, go to <http://www.bccdc.ca/covid19closecontacts>

For more information on COVID-19, go to www.bccdc.ca

If you develop severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing (e.g. struggling to breathe or speaking in single words) or chest pain, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.