1. What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some coronaviruses cause respiratory illness in people, ranging from mild common colds to severe pneumonias. Others cause illness in animals only. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people, and more rarely, these can spread from person to person through close contact.
- COVID-19 is what is called a novel coronaviruses. Novel coronaviruses 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.

2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:
  - Fever
  - A new cough or a chronic cough that is worsening
  - New or worsening shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Sore throat
  - Runny nose
- Additional Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:
  - Stuffy nose
  - Painful swallowing
  - Headache
  - Chills
  - Muscle or joint aches
  - Feeling unwell in general, or new fatigue or severe exhaustion
  - Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
  - Loss of sense of smell or taste
  - Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye
- Most people (about 80%) recover from this disease without needing special treatment. However, it can cause serious illness. Those who are older, and those with other medical problems are more likely to develop serious illness, which can include:
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Pneumonia
  - 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 and/or lung disease
  - Cancer
  - Diabetes
3. How is COVID-19 spread from person-to-person?
   - COVID-19 is transmitted through person-to-person spread by:
     - Droplets, like from a cough or sneeze, talking, laughing and singing
     - 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.
   - People who have COVID-19 can spread it to others before they start to feel sick or even if they never develop symptoms. However, the highest risk of spreading COVID-19 is from people who have symptoms like cough or runny nose.

4. Who is most at risk for becoming very sick with COVID-19?
   - Although most people who develop COVID-19 will experience mild illness, some individuals are more likely to become seriously ill. Older adults and people with medical conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and lung disease appear to be at higher risk of becoming very sick.

5. How is COVID-19 treated?
   - Most people with mild illness will recover on their own. Although there are no specific medications for COVID-19 at this time, supportive care is being used to treat people with COVID-19. The Alberta health care system is able to provide effective care for people who develop a serious COVID-19 illness.

6. Are there vaccines to prevent COVID-19?
   - Not yet. Much research is currently underway to development a vaccine, but it could take some time before a vaccine is developed and approved for use in Canada.

7. What is the difference between COVID-19 and influenza?
   - In some ways, COVID-19 is similar to influenza (also known as the flu):
     - Both COVID-19 and the flu cause respiratory disease in people who get sick.
     - Both are spread the same way, via small droplets from the nose and mouth.
     - Neither one is spread through the air over long distances and times, unlike a disease like the measles.
   - There are some key differences between COVID-19 and the flu:
     - We currently have no specific vaccine or treatment for COVID-19. A new vaccine for influenza is developed each year to protect against the latest influenza strains.
     - COVID-19 causes severe disease in a higher percentage of cases than seasonal influenza. Estimates of mortality in COVID-19 cases depend on many things, but on average they range from about 3 - 4 deaths per 100 people infected. By comparison, seasonal influenza is deadly in about 1 in every 1000 who are infected.
     - Because COVID-19 can cause such a serious illness, it is critical to keep it from spreading by having people with a cough or fever stay home and away from others.

8. How can I protect myself and my family from COVID-19?
   - Make sure you practice proper physical distancing. Wear a mask in public when it is difficult to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres at all times. Masks should be used in addition to other public health measures to limit spread.
   - Adhere to the same practices we recommend for protecting against all respiratory illnesses:
     - Wash your hands using an alcohol-based rub or soap and warm water for at least twenty seconds.
     - Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
     - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
     - Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
If you do get sick, you should stay home and complete the COVID-19 Online Assessment tool to see if you should be tested.

9. What are your recommendations for people who are immune compromised, have asthma or at high risk of severe illness for other medical reasons?
   • Stay home. Now is the time to stay home and avoid social and other outings that are not essential.
   • If you must leave your home, make sure you practice proper physical distancing. Wear a mask in public when it is difficult to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres at all times. Masks should be used in addition to other public health measures to limit spread.
   • Follow the same practices recommended for protection against all respiratory illnesses:
     o Wash your hands using an alcohol-based rub or soap and warm water for at least twenty seconds.
     o Avoid touching your face, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
     o Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
     o Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched.
     o When sick, cover your cough and sneezes with your arm, and then wash your hands.
   • Call 911 if you become seriously ill and need immediate medical attention.

10. When should I go to the hospital?
   • Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention.
   • If you do not need urgent medical attention, take the online self-assessment tool, call your doctor or call Health Link at 811 for virtual health assessment and referral.

COVID-19 Testing in Alberta

11. I’m feeling ill and think I may have COVID-19. What should I do?
   • Effective Sept. 17, all Albertans who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 are eligible for testing.
   • Asymptomatic testing is still available for those that fall into the following risk groups:
     o Albertans who are close contacts of a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or not;
     o Albertans who are linked to a known outbreak, whether symptomatic or not; and,
     o Asymptomatic Albertans who are:
       ➢ School teachers and/or school staff;
       ➢ Healthcare workers;
       ➢ Staff and/or residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care;
       ➢ Experiencing homelessness; or
       ➢ Require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel
   • Testing is by appointment, which can be easily booked online by visiting www.ahs.ca/covid. If using the Internet is not an option, 811 can book an appointment.
   • Healthcare workers can still choose to take Healthcare Worker online self-assessment tool.

Steps to take if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19

• Self-isolate
• Do not attend work, school, social events, or any other public gatherings.
• Don’t share personal items like dishes, utensils, or towels.
• Wash your hands often.
• Avoid close contact with other people, especially those with chronic conditions, a compromised immune system, or seniors (over 65 years of age).
• Please do not visit a hospital, physician’s office, lab or healthcare facility without consulting your doctor or Health Link (811) first.
  o Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention. Inform them that you may have COVID-19.
- Stay home for a minimum of 10 days with any cold or flu symptoms until feeling well.
- If symptoms continue past 10 days, isolation should as well.
- If you have life-threatening symptoms, go to an emergency department or call 911.
- Travellers must self-isolate for 14 days upon return, even when feeling fine. If symptoms are experienced during this period of isolation, you must continue to isolate for an additional 10 days following the onset of symptoms, no matter how long you’ve already been in self-isolation.
- Please visit ahs.ca/covid for the complete guidelines on self-isolation.

12. Who is considered priority testing for COVID-19?
- Testing in Alberta will shift to focus on those with symptoms, coupled with asymptomatic testing for only those in the risk groups outlined below.
  - Albertans with symptoms of COVID-19;
  - Albertans who are close contacts of a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or not;
  - Albertans who are linked to a known outbreak, whether symptomatic or not; and,
  - Asymptomatic Albertans who are:
    - School teachers and/or school staff;
    - Healthcare workers;
    - Staff and/or residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care;
    - Experiencing homelessness; or
    - Require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel
- Asymptomatic testing is no longer be recommended for Albertans who don’t fall into these risk groups.

13. Why did the criteria for COVID-19 testing change?
- Effective Sept. 17, Alberta is shifting to targeted COVID-19 testing to reduce testing wait times, speed up access to results and support Albertans during respiratory virus and influenza season in the winter months ahead.
- Albertans with symptoms remain the highest priority for testing, with targeting asymptomatic testing for specific risk groups as identified below. This is the best way to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of Albertans during the coming months.
- Anyone with symptoms, close contacts of a confirmed case and those linked to an outbreak will continue to be tested. These are our top priorities.
- The spread of COVID-19 will continue to be monitored, and our testing strategy will be adapted as needed.

14. I’ve taken the online assessment and determined that I need to be tested. Is there a way to book an appointment online to be tested for COVID-19?
- On May 29, AHS launched a new feature to allow Albertans taking an online self-assessment to book an appointment online, if they need to be tested.
- Testing will be by appointment, which can be easily booked online by visiting www.ahs.ca/covid. If using the Internet is not an option, 811 can book an appointment online.
- Once an Albertan completes the online self-assessment, they will be presented with an option to book an appointment online with the closest location, available appointment dates and times for testing.
- Upon selecting their chosen date and time, they will receive a booking confirmation and at the same time, the booking will show up in the schedule at the testing assessment centre.
- The online booking feature will help free up AHS’ resources and will help Albertans access testing more conveniently.
15. I was tested for COVID-19. While waiting for test results, when am I required to self-isolate and when am I not?

- The COVID-19 test detects if the virus is in your nose or throat. It is important that you understand what to do while you await your tests results, and what it means if your COVID-19 test is positive or negative:

- **You are legally required to isolate if:**
  - you test positive for COVID-19;
  - you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition;
  - you have been in contact in the last 14 days with someone known to have COVID-19; OR
  - you have travelled outside Canada within the last 14 days.
  - Even if you are not legally required to isolate, you should stay home when sick with any illness, until symptoms resolve.

- **You do not have to isolate if:**
  - you have no symptoms of illness, and you have not been exposed to someone known to have COVID-19 and you have not travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days;
  - you are waiting for results and you did not have symptoms when you were tested and do not have any now;
  - you have symptoms of illness that are related to a pre-existing illness or health condition, and are not new; you have tested negative for COVID-19 and have no symptoms of illness and have had no contact with someone with COVID-19;
  - you have tested negative for COVID-19 and have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.

- For more information, see self-isolation guidelines.

16. If I require testing, can I receive my results by text message or autodialer?

- Albertans can now receive their COVID-19 test results — either positive or negative — through a text message or an automated phone call.
- As of September 10, people can opt-in to have texted or automated call results if they book a COVID-19 test through ahs.ca/covid or are tested on a drop in basis at an AHS assessment centre.
- People who don’t choose the text or automated call methods will receive their results by a phone call from an AHS team member.
- Albertans who opt for a text message are advised results are texted any time of the day, seven days a week. Automated phone calls are made between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m., seven days a week.
- Parents and guardians will also be able to consent to receive automated test results for dependents (aged 17 years and younger). Each test result is delivered by a dedicated call or text. This could mean multiple calls or texts are delivered to a single number provided for a family.
- As part of standard contact tracing process, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 will also be contacted by phone by AHS’ Public Health team, for further follow-up and support.

17. Is there any other ways I access my test results?

- On Aug. 27, Alberta Health announced Albertans age 14 and up can now access the MyHealth Records (MHR) tool immediately after signing up online, without waiting for mailed verification.
- Albertans need to sign up for a MyAlberta Digital ID to use this service.
- Albertans who sign-up for MyHealth Records are able to see their COVID test results – as well as other lab work and immunization records - as soon as they are ready.
18. I am required to travel and need a copy of my test results to share with the airline and the country I will be visiting. How can I access a printed copy of my results?

- Albertans requiring test results prior to travel can secure their printable COVID-19 test results through several means.
- These include their MyHealth Record account, through their family physician or primary healthcare provider, or through AHS by completing the new Request to Access Health Information Travel Form.
- Travellers are responsible for understanding any COVID-19 testing and reporting requirements for their travel, allowing enough time for their testing, and securing access to printable results.
- All Albertans requiring proof of COVID-19 testing are advised to plan ahead, and allow at least seven days from the time they are swabbed for COVID-19 to having access to printable test results.
- Detailed information for travellers requiring testing is now also available on the AHS website.
- Albertans who require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel, can access asymptomatic testing through AHS or by visiting a participating pharmacy.

19. I just received a positive COVID-19 test result. What do I do?

- If you have/had symptoms and your test result for COVID-19 is positive, you are legally required to isolate for 10 days from when your symptoms started and until symptoms are gone (whichever is longer).
- If you have not had any symptoms, but your test is positive, you are legally required to isolate for 10 days from the date you were tested; this date will change if you develop symptoms during this 10 day period.
  - You will be given instructions by Public Health.
    - Isolation helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 by lowering the chance the virus could spread to others.
    - You must stay at home – don’t leave your home or attend work, school, social events or any other public gatherings, unless you need medical assistance:
      - Call 911 if you are seriously ill and need immediate medical attention. Inform them that you have COVID-19.
      - If you do not need urgent medical attention, you can call your primary health care provider or 811 for a virtual health assessment.
- Avoid close contact with other people, including household members, and especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly, cover your cough and sneezes, avoid sharing household items and clean and disinfect frequently touched and shared surfaces.
- You will be contacted by Public Health for information and instructions.

20. What is AHS’ process following a confirmed case of COVID-19?

- When a case of COVID-19 is confirmed by lab testing, AHS’ Public Health team contacts the individual and provides them with direction to isolate. Public Health also works with the individual to determine who they have been in contact with since their symptoms started.
- AHS then directly contacts any individual considered exposed to confirmed cases. These individuals are asked to self-isolate and be tested for COVID-19. This is called contact tracing, and is done in response to each case of COVID-19 we confirm by lab testing.
- Only those individuals contacted directly by AHS are considered exposed to any case. If you are not contacted directly by AHS, you are not considered exposed.
- To protect patient privacy, no patient details are provided about the patient with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- If you are known to have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, you will be contacted directly by AHS.

21. I just received a negative COVID-19 test result. What do I do?

- If you do not have symptoms of illness, AND have not been in contact with a known case of COVID-19 OR have not returned from travel outside of Canada within the last 14 days, you do not need to
isolate. Continue to follow good respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene, and practice physical distancing.

- If your test is negative but you have been in contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19 or you have returned from travel outside of Canada you must still isolate for the full 14 days from your last contact with the person who is positive, or from the day you returned to Canada.
- Remember: your test result is for that point in time only. It doesn't tell you if you have had COVID-19 before, and it doesn't predict if you will get it in the future. You'll need to continue to follow all public health measures, such as physical distancing and hand hygiene, even if your test is negative.
- If you develop new symptoms, isolate and take the COVID-19 self-assessment online, or call Health Link at 811 for additional advice.

22. What does the testing of asymptomatic Albertans reveal?

- Asymptomatic testing will now only be available for those in the risk groups outlined below.
  - Albertans who are close contacts of a confirmed case, whether symptomatic or not;
  - Albertans who are linked to a known outbreak, whether symptomatic or not; and,
  - Asymptomatic Albertans who are:
    - School teachers and/or school staff;
    - Healthcare workers;
    - Staff and/or residents at congregate living facilities, including long-term care;
    - Experiencing homelessness; or
    - Require asymptomatic testing for the purpose of travel
- Testing can only determine whether a person has COVID-19 at the time testing, even if they are asymptomatic.
- Tests cannot reliably determine whether someone has previously had COVID-19. They also cannot assess immunity to COVID-19.
- Please be aware that anyone who was asymptomatic when tested and who tests positive for COVID-19 is legally required to self-isolate for 10 days after the swab was taken. Close contacts of people with positive test results will also have to self-isolate.

COVID-19 APP

23. Is there an app that can let me know if I’ve been exposed to COVID-19?

- The ABTraceTogether app, created by the Government of Alberta, will enhance the current manual contact tracing process and help Albertans protect themselves and their loved ones. It that can help identify if you’ve been exposed to, or if you’ve exposed others, to COVID-19.
- The app uses your phone’s Bluetooth to keep an anonymous log of other app users you’ve been in close contact with.
- The app is now available to download for free from the App Store and Google Play. More information about the app is available from the Government of Alberta, here.

Caring For Yourself or Loved Ones with COVID-19

24. My loved one who I live with, has or is being tested for COVID-19. How can I take care of them and not get sick myself?

- If at all possible, try to ensure that the ill person has a designated bedroom and bathroom.
- Maintain physical distance from the ill individual, as much as possible.
- Visitors should not come to the home.
- Do not allow the ill person to prepare meals for others, and ensure that the ill person uses separate preparation area or at least prepares meals at a different time, washing all surfaces after.
• Avoid sharing household items like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels and pillows.
• Wash your hands frequently, with soap and warm water.
• Frequently sanitize all surfaces, particular hand rails, door knobs, sink taps, toilets, and other items of frequent touching.
• Advise loved ones to cover their coughs and sneezes with their arm, not their hand, and to practice good respiratory etiquette at all times.
• Monitor yourself for symptoms and call Health Link at 811 or call your doctor for assessment and advice if you have symptoms yourself.

25. What does isolation mean?
• Isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people. This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school, child care, athletic events, university, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and all public gatherings.
  o You should, (where possible) not use public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing.
  o As much as possible, you should limit contact with people.
  o You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food on the doorstep.
  o You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.
  o Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, pillows, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water, place in the dishwasher for cleaning, or wash in the washing machine.
  o Wash your hands often with soap and water and regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched and shared surfaces such as doorknobs and counters.
  o If you need to leave your home for an urgent errand, such as picking up essential medication, as a precaution to reduce risk of spread, you should wear a mask while you are out.
  o During this time, it is important that you monitor your health for symptoms like fever or cough.
  o If you do develop symptoms, you can complete the online assessment tool for additional advice or call Health Link at 811.

26. I am not having symptoms, but I’m concerned about COVID-19 and want to talk to someone. Should I call Health Link?
• Please visit the following websites if you have further general questions about what COVID-19 is, how it is spread, or how many cases there are in Alberta and the world at present. You can call Health Link 811 if you have additional questions about what you need to do to protect yourself and your family against getting a COVID-19 infection.
  o Alberta Health: alberta.ca/covid19
  o Public Health Agency of Canada: canada.ca
  o World Health Organization: who.int

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

27. I am worried about catching COVID-19. Should I wear gloves when outside of my house or in public places?
• Medical gloves are a very important component of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers. However, gloves do not need to be worn by members of the general public during their daily activities, such as when grocery shopping.
• Gloves can create a false sense of security. If not used and disposed of properly, wearing gloves may provide another surface for the virus to live on – potentially encouraging virus transmission.
• Gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene.
We recommend frequent and thorough hand washing (with soap and water for 20 seconds) or hand hygiene using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty, and covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your face, nose or mouth regardless of whether gloves are being worn. These remain the best evidence-based ways to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

For those who choose to wear gloves, proper glove use must be practiced:
- Hands should always be washed and/or sanitized prior to putting on gloves and after taking gloves off.
- Gloves should be changed when they become soiled or torn.
- Change gloves if you touch your face – eyes, nose or mouth – or cover a cough or sneeze with your hands while wearing gloves.
- Disposable gloves should be thrown out and not used again once they have been taken off.
- Reusable gloves must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

28. I am worried about catching COVID-19. Should I wear a mask if I have to leave my house or when in public?
- Wear a non-medical mask in public when a distance of two metres cannot be easily maintained.
- Face coverings are another way to cover your mouth and nose to prevent respiratory droplets from contaminating other people or surfaces. Additionally, wearing a mask may stop you from touching your nose and mouth.
- If you are in public and are unable to maintain physical distancing and are wearing a non-medical mask or face covering:
  - Ensure your mask is well-fitted and does not gape at the sides.
  - Be aware that masks can become contaminated on the outside. Avoid moving or adjusting the mask. Assume the mask has been contaminated and take proper precautions.
  - Critically, if you wear a mask, you must wash your hands before putting it on, as well as before and after taking it off.
  - Cloth masks should be worn only a short time, as there is some evidence that they can trap virus particles after they become damp, which may put the wearer at greater risk.
  - For those wearing non-medical masks, it may be prudent to carry a bag with several clean masks in it, as well as a plastic bag that can be used to safely store used masks until they can be washed at home.
  - It is critical that used masks be carefully handled to avoid spreading infection to others.
- Frequent and thorough hand washing, physical distancing, covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and avoiding touching your face, nose or mouth remain the best evidence-based ways to prevent the spread of respiratory illness.

29. I understand that the Government of Alberta will be handing out masks to all Albertans. Where and when can I get one? Is masking going to be mandatory?
- On May 29, Health Minister Tyler Shandro announced the first round of mask distribution where 20 million masks were being distributed to Albertans at no cost, through A&W, McDonald’s, and Tim Hortons drive-thru locations across the province.
- Government is also working with municipalities, First Nations communities, Métis Settlements and local agencies to distribute masks to those who need them, including those who depend on public transit.
- This initiative is part of Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy, recognizing that as businesses and other activities re-open, Albertans may find themselves in situations where keeping two metres apart is difficult.
- Each Albertan is eligible to receive one package of four masks which are being distributed on the honour system.
- Masks are also available by calling 211.
Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy

30. What restrictions remain in place when gathering in groups?

- Alberta is currently in Stage two of our relaunch strategy which was launched on June 12. Albertans can enjoy more indoor and outdoor activities, while observing public health orders on gathering sizes and physical distancing.

- The following measures remain to protect Albertans’ health and limit the spread of COVID-19:
  - 50 people maximum for indoor social gatherings which includes wedding and funeral receptions, birthday parties.
  - 100 people maximum for outdoor events and indoor seated/audience events, including wedding ceremonies, funeral services, movie theatres, arts and culture performances and other events where people remain seated.
  - There is no limit on the number of people attending worship gatherings, restaurants, cafes, lounges, bars, as well as casinos and bingo halls, provided public health measures are in place.
  - Households can increase their close interactions with other cohort households to a maximum of 15 people.

- Find more information visit: Alberta.ca/covid19

31. What businesses have been permitted to re-launch?

- Stage two includes a further reopening of businesses and services while ensuring both physical distancing and public health guidelines in place. These include:
  - K-12 schools
  - Libraries
  - More types of surgeries
  - Wellness services such as massage, acupuncture and reflexology
  - Personal services (esthetics, cosmetics skin and body treatments, manicures, pedicures, waxing, facial treatments, artificial tanning)
  - Movie theatres and theatres
  - Community halls
  - Team sports
  - Indoor recreation, fitness and sports, including gyms and arenas
  - Pools for leisure swimming
  - VLTs in restaurants and bars
  - Bingo halls and casinos, not including table games
  - Instrumental concerts
  - Provincial campgrounds at full capacity

- Stage one was launched in Alberta on May 14, with the exception of Calgary and Brooks who gradually joined the rest of Alberta in Stage one on June 1. Stage one of Alberta’s relaunch allowed some businesses to resume operations with enhanced infections prevention and controls in place, including:
  - Retail business including clothing, furniture and book stores
  - Farmers’ market vendors
  - Hairstyling and barber shops
  - Cafés, restaurants, pubs and bars can reopen for table service at 50% capacity
  - Museums and art galleries
  - Daycares and out-of-school care, with occupancy limits
  - Some scheduled, non-urgent surgeries to resume gradually

- Find more information on Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy, here.
32. What types of gatherings are still not approved in stage two?
- Social gatherings that exceed above listed maximum
- Major festivals and concerts, large conferences, trade shows and events (as these are non-seated social events and/or vocal concerts)
- Nightclubs
- Amusement parks
- Indoor children’s play places
- Hookah lounges (permitted for food and drink only)
- Major sporting events and tournaments
- Non-essential travel outside the province is not recommended

33. What will the Alberta Government be watching for as we move forward with the relaunch strategy in Alberta?
- The re-launch strategy is dependent on monitoring the healthcare system, with careful attention to COVID-19 hospitalizations and ICU admissions throughout this period.
- Confirmed cases and rates of new infections will be monitored on an ongoing basis to inform proactive responses in localized areas of the province. Decisions will be applied at both provincial and local levels, where necessary.
- While restrictions are gradually eased across the province, an outbreak may mean that they need to be strengthened temporarily in a local area.
- During each phase of re-launch, we must still continue to practice health recommendations including hand washing, staying home when sick and maintaining physical distance.

AHS’ Operations

34. Has AHS begun to resume normal operations or performing scheduled surgeries, procedures, exams and appointments?
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, AHS delayed all non-urgent scheduled surgical activity across Alberta.
- However on May 4, AHS resumed non-urgent scheduled day surgeries and procedures. These will include cataracts, gynecological procedures, general day surgery, nose surgery, reconstructive plastic surgery, and vascular and urology procedures.
  - AHS and Covenant Health are resuming some ambulatory care and diagnostic imaging (DI) services beginning this week, starting May 11.
- On May 22, The Government of Alberta announced the AHS plan to expand the resumption of surgery to include day surgeries and those requiring overnight and short stays.

35. How will AHS decide which surgeries, procedures, exams and appointments will proceed?
- AHS will continue to balance the safety of patients and staff while resuming services for Albertans waiting for care.
- Decisions on which services proceed are based on clinical need, with those most in need and waiting longest booked first. These decisions are made within each zone, and are also informed by the pandemic response in different parts of the province.
- AHS will reach out to patients directly to reschedule their procedures.

36. How will Alberta and AHS address the backlog of surgeries created by the pandemic?
- On Sept. 10, Alberta Health and AHS announced a plan to clear the surgical backlog created during the pandemic, by increasing surgical activity volume to 150 per cent in order to meet the 2023 Alberta
Surgical Initiative (ASI) commitment of providing all scheduled surgery within clinically acceptable times. This plan will support surgical activity in both urban and rural communities across the province.

- For more information, see the [news release](#).

## Visiting Loved Ones at an AHS Facility

As the pandemic evolves family support and visitation in acute care and continuing care settings will continue to be adjusted. These changes reflect the balance we must keep to address the ongoing risk of COVID-19, as well as the well-being of patients and residents as well as families, visitors, staff, physicians and volunteers. For the most up-to-date version of the visitation guidelines, please visit [www.ahs.ca/visitation](http://www.ahs.ca/visitation).

### 37. Can I go with a loved one to Urgent Care or to the Emergency Department?

- Yes. In Ambulatory Clinics including Emergency Department/Urgent Care, patients may identify one Designated Family/Support Person to accompany them.
- All support persons must be over the age of 14 for adult clinic visits. If visiting the Alberta Children’s Hospital or the Stollery Children’s Hospital, the Designated Family/Support Person must be 18 years of age or older.

### 38. Can I visit a loved one in hospital?

- Inpatients may identify two Designated Family/Support Persons that are permitted if the room is large enough for physical distancing to be maintained. There are a few exceptions which include:
  - **Maternity and Postpartum**: In consultation with the unit manager/charge nurse on a case-by-case basis, other support persons (e.g. surrogate parent or Doula) may be permitted in addition to the two Designated Family/Support Persons. Designated Family/Support Persons on a maternity ward must be 14 years of age or older.
  - **Pediatrics**: Two parents may be Designated Family/Support Persons. Children under the age of 18 are not allowed to visit at any time.
  - **Adults with disabilities**: In consultation with the unit manager on a case by case basis, other support persons may be permitted in addition to the two Designated Family/Support Persons.
  - **End-of-Life situations**: Two Designated Family/Support Persons at a time can be present if the room is large enough for physical distancing to be maintained between individuals. The attending physician, in consultation with the unit manager/charge nurse, determines if the patient condition is considered end-of-life.
- For the most up-to-date version of the enhanced visitation guidelines visit [www.ahs.ca/visitation](http://www.ahs.ca/visitation).

### 39. What is the difference between a Designated Family/Support Person(s) and a visitor?

- An important part of this step is defining the Designated Family/Support Person(s), what that role entails, who those individuals are to patients, and how designated support person(s) are different than visitors.
- **A Designated Family/Support Person is:**
  - Someone identified by the patient as an important support
  - Someone the patient wants involved in their care and health matters
  - A relative, legal guardian, close friend or formal/informal caregiver
- **Everyone else, who is not designated by a patient or resident, are considered visitors.**
- **A Visitor is:**
  - Not involved in the patient/resident’s health care
  - Someone whose time with the patient is discretionary and usually temporary
  - Visiting for purposes that are more social in nature
• Patients can determine who will be their designated family or support person and the extent the person is involved in their care, including collaborating with the healthcare team.

40. Can I visit a resident in long term care, supportive living or congregate living?
• As of July 23, continuing care facilities will operate under a new approach to family support and visitation based on the CMOH Order 29-2020. This Order will be followed by all licensed supportive living, long-term care and hospice facilities.
• Residents of these sites are at extreme risk if exposed to COVID-19, therefore a safe visitation approach is required.
• **Indoor visits:**
  o Each resident or alternate decision maker may designate up to two Designated Family/Support Persons (over the age of 18) who are essential to maintaining mental and physical health.
  o Additional visitors may be given access in specific situations including end-of-life, change in health status or other pressing circumstances (e.g. financial or legal matters, family crisis).
• **Outdoor visits:**
  o Up to five individuals, including the resident, may participate in outdoor visits, if consistent with site policy and public health measures.
• For more information please review CMOH Order 29-2020, Protecting Residents at Congregate Care Facilities and What to Expect, before your visit.
• Book a visit using the Request a Visit tool.

41. Is there an online booking tool to allow family members to schedule visits with patients at a continuing care site?
• AHS has launched an exciting new online tool that allows designated family/support persons and other visitors to request scheduled visits with residents in continuing care sites operated by AHS, Capital Care, Carewest and Covenant Health online.
• Albertans who would like to request a visit at participating continuing care sites can go to AHS.ca/ccvisit and complete the online booking request form specifying the location and preferred date and time of the visit.
• If a request cannot be accommodated, the submitter will receive an email directing you to request a visit for another date or time.
• Participating locations will have a link to the online booking request tool. All other sites will have their contact information available on the page for Albertans looking to request a visit by phone.
• The tool is being launched in phases at various locations across the province over the next week. Please go to AHS.ca/ccvisit for the most up-to-date information on which sites are currently accepting online bookings.

**Travel:**

42. What do I do if I am returning to Alberta from outside of Canada?
• The Government of Canada has implemented a mandatory 14-day quarantine, under the Quarantine Act, for travellers returning to Canada.
• All travellers returning from outside Canada are:
  o legally required to self-isolate for 14 days, and
  o monitor for symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, nasal congestion, or sore throat
  o If you become sick during this time, you must self-isolate for at least 10 additional days from all other members of your household from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.
• If you are quarantined because you recently came back from outside the country, or you are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, you must remain on your own property.
You should not leave your property during the 14 days of self-isolation unless you have made safe arrangements before you leave or you require urgent medical attention.

- If you experience symptoms use the online assessment tool to schedule an appointment. If the Internet is not an option, call 811. If you have symptoms that need immediate medical attention, call 911 and inform them that you may have COVID-19.
- Find more information here.

43. I recently travelled, how do I find out if someone on my flight tested positive for COVID-19?

- Albertans should monitor their air travel for flights with confirmed COVID-19 cases, even if the flight was within Canada. Flights that have confirmed cases and the affected seats are posted online by the Government of Canada.
- If you recently returned from a flight:
  - Check the federal list of affected flights for updates
    - All passengers from international flights are legally required to isolate for 14 days.
    - Passengers in affected seats from domestic flights are considered close contacts and are at risk of exposure. You are legally required to isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms.
  - Monitor for symptoms such as cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat.
    - If you become sick during this time, you must isolate for at least 10 additional days from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

44. Am I allowed to travel outside the province?

- Responsible travel within Alberta is permitted, including to vacation homes, cabins, cottages, hotels and commercial accommodations, campgrounds, national and provincial parks. Physical distancing and gathering restrictions still apply.
- Non-essential travel outside the province is not recommended. The Canada/US border also remains closed to non-essential travel. Find more information on current travel restrictions here.