

memorandum



*The following has been sent on behalf of Lisa Young, Director,
Infection Prevention & Control*

DATE: November 15, 2022

TO: All Acute Care Site Directors

RE: Changes in Proof of Vaccination for Visitors in Acute Care

As we move forward into winter, it is important to recognize that COVID-19 is only one of the many respiratory viruses we are experiencing in our acute care facilities. Equally, it is one of the many challenges we face, not least capacity and staffing. To this end, I am working with all the key stakeholders who support our Ambassador Program, in reviewing the next phase of operation.

In this changing landscape, it is no longer relevant to ask visitors for proof of their vaccine for COVID-19. As of Monday, November 14th, I communicated that proof of vaccine for visitors would no longer be required. This change is in line with all other health authorities in BC.

What does this mean for your site and what are you required to do about this change?

- Please communicate this change to your Ambassadors
 - They are only to stop asking for proof of vaccination
 - They must continue to actively ask the screening questions regarding illness suggestive of COVID-19 (and in fact other respiratory viruses)
 - If a visitor is ill they should be discouraged from visiting as they have been for the past two and a half years
 - They should continue to respectfully ask visitors to wear a medical-grade mask that covers their nose and mouth

As I highlighted above, I recognize that staffing challenges mean that there may be times when entrances may be unmanned, compromising active screening. For this reason, I am working with Communications, and will be sharing a poster that can be obtained in large format to be posted at these entrances to ask visitors to ensure they are wearing a mask, and not to visit if they are ill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LY", representing Lisa Young.

Lisa Young
Director

cc: Marko Pelijhan, Interim VP, Clinical Ops SI & Cowichan Valley



Politics News

BC quietly removes all requirement to self-isolate when COVID-positive

The change marks the end of mandatory COVID-19 public health measures in the province, but was not prominently featured in any government communication

By [Jimmy Thomson](#) November 18, 2022



Dr. Bonnie Henry and health minister Adrian Dix give an update to COVID-19 guidance in November. Photo: BC Government / Flickr

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For the first time since the pandemic began in March of 2020, if you have COVID-19, you're no longer required to self-isolate in BC.

That's the most recent guidance from the BCCDC, posted to their website on Nov. 17.

Despite the almost singular focus on COVID-19 measures and prevention in the province over the past two years, the change was not clearly announced by the province.

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A spokesperson for the BCCDC told Capital Daily the change was announced in a Wednesday press conference by Dr. Bonnie Henry and health minister Adrian Dix.

At one point in the hourlong press conference, Dr. Henry said, “The actions we take to prevent the transmission and to look after ourselves are the same.” She then added, “One of the things that we've had in place for a long time is saying, if you have COVID, you need to stay home for five days. That's no longer relevant in the setting that we are in now. Instead, if you have symptoms of any respiratory illness, we suggest—well, we recommend—the guidance, is to stay home and to limit close contact with others.”

That appears to be the only mention in the announcement of any change in the requirement to self-isolate.

A [press release](#) sent to media the same day as the press conference notes that people who are experiencing respiratory symptoms “should stay home and limit close

contact with others,” but there is no mention of a change to self-isolation requirements.

No media has yet reported the change, indicating that it was not widely understood to be a change at all; every other time there has been a significant change to isolation requirements it has been reported across the province.

The BCCDC spokesperson directed us to the health ministry for clarification of the decision; a ministry spokesperson responded on Monday morning, saying the “basic guidance has not changed. If you have symptoms or have a positive test, you should isolate as much as is possible until the symptoms are gone.”

Changing guidance

A page on the BCCDC website called “[If You Have COVID-19](#)” has been one resource for BC residents to determine their best course of action, and has reflected the changing guidance as conditions and public health orders have changed.

The page was first created on December 24, 2021, and according to the [archive collected in the Wayback Machine](#), by January, the instructions were strict but clear: “If you test positive for COVID-19, you need to: Self-isolate and manage your symptoms; Let your close contacts know; Complete an online form to report your test result.”

In that case, the guidance was [accompanied by a dedicated press conference](#) to alert the public to the change. The language, similarly, was clear: “We have come to a consensus that, with the milder illness that we're seeing most people right now, we can make a change to reduce the period of time that people need to be isolated if they're sick,” Henry said.

By April, the page included the province’s differing instructions for people who are and are not vaccinated—but the underlying guidelines remained the same: people who tested positive are required, by order of the public health officer, to self-isolate until their symptoms had improved, at the earliest.

As of Thursday, all mention of different responses for people who are and are not vaccinated has been removed from that page.

Similarly, the imperative—“needs to stay home”—has been removed.

Now the page says, "Starting November 17, 2022, people who have COVID-19 are no longer required to self-isolate. However, it is still important for people with symptoms to stay home as much as possible to reduce any potential spread of illness until your symptoms have improved, and you are able to participate in your usual activities."

This latest quiet shift in guidance heralds the culmination of the removal of every mandatory layer of protection against the pandemic virus in BC. At the press conference on Wednesday, Dr. Henry also announced she [would not reinstate a mask mandate](#) despite a spike in pediatric hospital admissions and school absences due to illness.

Sarah Otto, a member of the independent BC COVID-19 Modelling Group, tweeted about the news of the change with a single word: ["Yikes."](#)

—With files from Brishti Basu

Oh, hi there. Are you still reading? You know the story is over, right? "With files from Brishti Basu" is the last line.

This is Jimmy, the guy who wrote the story (with lots of help from Brishti). I just wanted to take a second to let you know that I really appreciate you reading this story. You may have noticed that Twitter is headed in a sketchy direction. If you want to make sure you don't miss our next scoop, sign up for our newsletter, above. It comes out every morning, and it has lots of information you won't find even here on our website.

If you're already getting our newsletter, thanks! That's great. Have you considered [becoming a member](#)? Members are so important to what we do here, and if you've got \$10/month you can spare, I encourage you to sign up to join more than 1,300 people who have decided to support us that way.

If you're already a member, then, well, it figures that you'd still be reading at this point. Keener. You keep being you.



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