COVID-19 COMMUNITY BULLETIN
March 19, 2020   Time: 4:00 pm

The following information is accurate as of the time of this bulletin.

Number of cases in BC: 271
Number of cases in the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) region: 152
There are NO confirmed cases of community transmission of the disease on the Sunshine Coast.

Local news
• Transit is still operating. There may be schedule changes coming so check with Transit before heading out.
• BC Ferries still operating on schedule. No more baggage service. No need for boarding passes. No catering services but grab and go food available. Staying in your car is now permitted.
• School District is planning for the end of Spring Break but has no news at this point.
• RCMP is fully staffed and operating as normal. They are maintaining physical distance by closing the Gibsons office and directing people to the Sechelt office where there are more reception staff and a larger space.

VCH
• Sechelt hospital is preparing by calling in all staff, setting up a separate COVID-19 ward to keep patients separate and ensuring staff cleaning and safety protocols are in place.
• The situation on the Coast is still considered good. The risk to the public is low if they follow the proper protection advice for the health authorities (see below).
• Testing is confined to: patients with respiratory symptoms who may require hospitalization, Health Care Workers, Long Term Care Facilities and those identified through clusters of outbreaks
• The hospital activated their Emergency Operations Centre to coordinate all information and necessary actions.
• Some non-urgent surgeries are cancelled.
• Some programs like ambulatory clinics and adult day care have been cancelled.

Emergency Operations Centre
• The Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) activated the Emergency Operation Centre.
• The EOC has staff from all Sunshine Coast municipal governments and key stakeholder to combine resources and share information.

Sechelt
• Municipal hall is closed to the public but staff are still working. Contact us by phone 604-885-1986 or email info@sechelt.ca
• Public washrooms are open
Library is closed
Visitor Information Centre is closed
Council meetings will be by Zoom web conferencing. Find the link on the meeting calendar at Sechelt.ca
We are working with the community and hope to have information out soon on social services available in our community and how to connect with them.

Mythbusters
We will try to correct any misinformation that we can here.

- Airborne transmission is possible: bodily fluid can travel through the air from a sneeze or a cough but it is not believed that the air alone contains the virus.
- When the sun comes out this will kill the virus: There is no evidence to support this.
- Cold weather will kill the virus

How the virus spreads
Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets generated when you cough or sneeze
- close, prolonged personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread is efficient when there is close contact.

Protect yourself and others

- Avoid situations that put you in close contact with others. Keep your physical distance to no less than 2 metres.
- Wash your hands regularly but especially after touching items in public settings.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your arm when coughing and sneezing.

The BC Centre for Disease Control states: “Current information suggests that older people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and lung disease are at higher risk of developing more severe illness or complications from COVID-19. If you are at higher risk for COVID-19 complications, follow general preventative strategies against infection, and should you become ill, seek medical help early.”

Physical Distancing
We don’t do social distancing in Sechelt. We encourage social behaviour by phone, text, message and video chat – or just from a safe distance. That’s the way we roll.

This means making changes in your everyday routines to minimize close contact with others, including:
• avoiding non-essential gatherings
• avoiding common greetings, such as handshakes
• avoiding crowded places such as concerts, arenas, conferences and festivals
• limiting contact with people at higher risk like older adults and those in poor health
• keeping a distance of at least 2 arms-length (approximately 2 metres) from others

When to self-isolate
Self-isolate if you:
• have no symptoms and
• may have been exposed to COVID-19 as a result of:
  o travelling outside of Canada within the last 14 days or
  o coming in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19
• have been asked to do so by your Public Health Authority

Self-isolation means to:
• stay at home
• monitor yourself for symptoms, even if mild, for 14 days
• avoid contact with others

If you develop symptoms, even if mild, stay home, avoid other people and contact your Public Health Authority as soon as possible.

Information on financial assistance
This assistance is offered through the federal government 1-800-622-6232

Reliable sources of information
Vancouver Coastal Health  http://www.vch.ca/
BC Centre for Disease Control  http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/

Contact us
604-885-1986  |  info@sechelt.ca  |  Sechelt.ca  |  facebook.com/DistrictOfSechelt

Paper copies of the daily bulletin are available in a box outside the municipal hall.