



Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer

NORTH ISLAND

250.331.8591

Charmaine Enns MD MHSc FRCPC 355-11th Street Courtenay, BC V9N 1S4

CENTRAL ISLAND

250.739.6304

Sandra Allison MD MPH CCFP FCFP FRCPC 3rd Floor, 6475 Metral Drive Nanaimo, BC V9T 2L9

COWICHAN REGION

250.737.2020

Shannon Waters MD MHSc FRCPC 202-6425 Norcross Road Duncan BC V9L 6C5

SOUTH ISLAND

250.519.3406

Réka Gustafson, CMHO MD MSc FRCPC

Mike Bensusic MD MPH FRCPC

Murray Fyfe MD MSc FRCPC

Dee Hoyano MD FRCPC

1837 Fort Street Victoria, BC V8R 1J6

AFTER HOURS ON CALL

1.800.204.6166

April 12, 2023

Tuberculosis cluster in South Vancouver Island

- Six cases of active TB with related genotypes have been detected in South Vancouver Island since 2022, indicating that local transmission of TB is occurring. Cases include people with precarious housing, and screening clinics have been initiated with community partners to identify and treat active and latent TB cases. Tuberculosis (TB) is a global disease and ~300 active cases are identified annually in BC (bit.ly/TBreports). Most cases are among people born outside of Canada and infected in their home country. Less commonly, TB transmission occurs within BC and risk factors include homelessness/underhoused and substance use. While the incidence of active TB is very low, we encourage clinicians to consider TB in patients presenting with compatible symptoms (persistent cough, hemoptysis, weight loss, fever, night sweats), and obtain chest radiography and sputum testing. TB skin test and IGRA are not recommended when testing for active TB. TB clinical resources can be found at bit.ly/BCCDctb. Consultation can be made through the Island TB Program at 250-519-1510, bit.ly/VIHAtb.

COVID-19 Spring Booster

- Based on guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (bit.ly/NACIspring), BC has initiated a spring COVID-19 booster campaign. The risk of severe disease after COVID-19 infection has decreased substantially due to very high vaccination coverage, decrease virulence of Omicron, and most people having been infected previously. A systematic review found that primary series vaccination and infection reduced the risk of severe disease by 97% at 12 months (bit.ly/hybridimmunity). Boosters have incremental benefits, which may be important for those at highest absolute risk of harm. Advanced age remains the primary risk factor for severe disease. Provincial eligibility criteria (for details see bit.ly/COVIDeligibility):

Should be offered to individuals who are:

- 80 years of age and older
Indigenous peoples 70 years of age and older
Residents of long term care (LTC) and alternate level of care clients awaiting placement
18 years of age and older who are moderately to severely immunosuppressed
50 years of age and older with certain underlying health conditions

May be offered to individuals with no prior history of SARS-CoV-2 infection who are:

- 60 to 79 years of age
Indigenous peoples 50 to 69 years of age
18-49 years of age with certain underlying health conditions

- All other adults who do not meet the above criteria may receive a spring booster based on a self-declared primary care provider recommendation. You do not need to provide a written recommendation. Patients can call 1-833-838-2323 to self-declare and book.