

For Immediate Release | August 21, 2020

Interior Health urges evacuation planning

PENTICTON – Interior Health thanks the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen, the City of Penticton and the BC Wildfire Service for ensuring we are briefed and supported in response to the Christie Mountain wildfire.

Interior Health is taking every precaution to ensure patients, residents and staff are safe and prepared should the wildfire threat increase. Our emergency operation centre is activated and planning includes public health measures to protect against COVID-19.

This year, wildfires are more complicated due to COVID-19. Everyone should start planning safe places to relocate now in the event you are evacuated from your home.

If you are vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19, or plan to reside with someone who is vulnerable, consider ways to reduce your contacts and bubble now to help keep yourself and your hosts safe.

We will do everything possible to prevent known cases of COVID-19 from mixing with the general public; however, COVID-19 is present throughout the province. We must all assume COVID-19 is in our communities and focus on public health guidance to protect ourselves and loved ones.

Please follow these important COVID-19 precautions:

- Stay home and avoid travel if you have symptoms, even mild ones.
- Maintain physical distancing (two metres apart) and use masks when distancing is not possible.
- Wash your hands regularly and do not touch your face.
- Do not plan or attend gatherings of more than 50 people. Limit gatherings to out of doors whenever possible.

Testing is recommended for anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Other milder symptoms may include: runny nose, fatigue, body aches (muscles and joints aching), diarrhea, headache, sore throat, vomiting and red eyes.

Information about testing and public exposures to COVID-19 throughout the Interior Health region is available here: <https://news.interiorhealth.ca/news/public-exposures/>

Answers to frequently asked questions are available on the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control website: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/common-questions>

For wildfire information, visit:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/Emergency/MajorEvents/Pages/default.aspx>.

For wildfire health impact information, visit:

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/YourEnvironment/Emergency/Wildfires/Pages/default.aspx>

