
9 March 2020

Dear Coaches, Organizers and Participants:

RE: Women’s World Curling 2020

The tournament organizers and Northern Health would like to advise coaches, parents, athletes and supports to take a proactive approach in the prevention of disease transmission at this year’s Women’s World Curling Tournament. Seasonal illnesses such as influenza, gastrointestinal illness and this year’s novel coronavirus are of particular concern, as teams and families from around the globe converge in Prince George.

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus causing respiratory illness. There have been a small number of cases of COVID-19 in B.C. which are being very closely managed. **The risk to British Columbians, and those travelling to British Columbia, remains low.**

The following preventive measures are recommended, and will help protect you and the athletes from illness:

- Wash hands frequently (use lots of soap and hot water or hand sanitizers that are provided).
- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- Know the symptoms of influenza and gastrointestinal illness and avoid contact with other people if you have them (See attached Frequently Asked Questions).
- Stay home if you’re sick.
- Avoid common touch surfaces such as door knobs and hand railings as much as possible.
- Increase environmental sanitation of common touch surfaces.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as water bottles, dishes, cutlery and cell phones.
- Get immunized against influenza.

People who experience symptoms should self-isolate, and contact their primary care provider (family doctor); visitors to the Prince George area, or those without a primary care provider should call BC’s 24-hour toll-free health information line by dialing 8-1-1. If they feel they need medical attention, they should call ahead to the Prince George Urgent & Primary Care Centre so the facility can be prepared to take precautions. If unable to call ahead (in an emergency), they should describe their symptoms, travel history and any sick contacts when they first arrive at the facility, so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

Sincerely,
Dr. Rakel Kling
Medical Health Officer

Stay Healthy at the 2020 Women's World Curling Tournament!

Frequently Asked Questions

March 2020

Northern Health is pleased to be working with organizers of the Women's World Curling Tournament in Prince George to help ensure a safe and healthy event. Due to seasonal illnesses (e.g. influenza), gastrointestinal illnesses (e.g. Norovirus), and other illness of concern (eg. coronavirus) Northern Health would like to advise coaches, parents, athletes, volunteers and spectators to take a proactive approach to preventing the spread of disease.

Large gatherings, such as the Women's World Curling tournament, may aid in the spread of infection with large numbers of people being in closer proximity with each other.

What is gastrointestinal illness?

Gastrointestinal illness, often caused by Norovirus, is common this time of year. Symptoms include nausea, abdominal cramps, chills, fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea. These symptoms usually only last a day or two, but because of its highly contagious nature, it is easily spread from person-to-person in the community.

What is influenza?

Influenza (e.g. "the flu") is an infection of the upper airway caused by an influenza virus. Symptoms include fever, headache, muscle pain, runny nose, sore throat, extreme tiredness, and cough. Children may also experience nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Symptoms can begin about 1 to 4 days after a person is first exposed to the influenza virus. Fever and other symptoms can usually last up to 7 to 10 days, with the cough and weakness lasting 1 to 2 weeks longer. Similar to gastroenteritis, influenza is easily spread from person-to-person in the community.

What is a Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus causing respiratory illness. There have been a small number of cases of COVID-19 in B.C. which are being very closely managed. **The risk to British Columbians, and those travelling to British Columbia, remains low.**

A new toll-free phone number (1-833-784-4397) has been established to answer questions about COVID-19. Service is available from 7 a.m. to midnight EST.

Anyone who is concerned they may have been exposed to, or are experiencing symptoms of, the coronavirus should self-isolate, and contact a primary care provider (family doctor), or call British Columbia's toll-free health information line by dialing 811. Individuals who feel they *need medical attention, should call ahead to the Prince George Urgent & Primary Care Centre so the facility can be prepared to take precautions* Further information about novel coronavirus is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control website www.bccdc.ca.

What can I do to prevent the spread of influenza, gastrointestinal illness, and COVID-19?

Community members can be instrumental in preventing the spread of illness by following these guidelines:

1. Stay home if sick:

- People who have gastrointestinal or respiratory symptoms should stay at home, and avoid situations where they could easily pass the illness on to others, including public gatherings.
- If you need health care advice, contact your primary care provider, or call BC's 24-hour, toll-free health information service (Healthlink BC) by dialing 811.

2. Proper hand washing:

- Careful hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease. Always wash your hands well for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap. Always wash your hands before and after using washroom, before eating or preparing foods, and after helping someone who is ill (such as an ill child).

3. Clean surface areas:

- Increase environmental sanitation by cleaning and disinfecting common touch surfaces such as door knobs, faucets, telephones, handrails, food contact surfaces, keyboards, etc.

In addition to the above items, the following preventive measures are also recommended:

- Avoid contact with people who are ill.
- Know the symptoms of influenza and gastrointestinal illness and avoid contact with other people if you have them.
- Avoid shared surfaces such as door knobs and hand railings as much as possible.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as water bottles, dishes, cutlery and cell phones.
- Keep your hands away from your nose, mouth and eyes.
- Cough/sneeze into your elbow or sleeve.
- Get immunized against influenza.

Please note: Hand sanitizers are available throughout the facility for your convenience

For more information on this and other public health topics visit: <http://www.northerhealth.ca> or call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1.

Northern Health wishes you a safe and healthy tournament.