

Increased COVID-19 Variants of Concern (VOC) in multiple communities in the South West

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is alerting the public of an increased risk of COVID-19 variants of concern (VOC) in multiple communities in the South West including Outlook, Rosetown, Kindersley, Maple Creek, Swift Current, Davidson, and Moose Jaw and surrounding areas.

The increase is related to a number of recent large outdoor gatherings and failure to comply with current Public Health measures.

Residents of these areas are strongly urged to strictly adhere to all current public health order and measures, including:

- Immediately seek testing if you suspect you may have been exposed or if you are symptomatic.
- Wear an approved mask and wear it properly.
- Keep 2 metres away from others when in public and wear a mask.
- Limit gatherings and ensure gathering sizes do not exceed public health orders.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer frequently, especially after touching potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, mouth or mask with unwashed or unsanitized hands.
- Stay home if you are unwell; seek health care services when you need help.
- Regularly monitor your health for any COVID-19 symptoms.

COVID-19 variants of concern are highly contagious, transmitting quickly within the community and can result in more severe disease and should be considered dangerous. The increased spread of COVID-19 and its variants could result in more illness, hospitalizations and deaths, with many of those falling ill younger than previously seen during the pandemic.

Additional information on variants of concern is available [online](#) along with all case numbers, including those [cases confirmed as variants of concern](#).

All members of the public are reminded of the following:

- COVID-19 and its variants are transmitted through coughing and sneezing (droplet transmission), and by touching surfaces with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing or sanitizing your hands.
- *Memorize and recognize the symptoms:* fever, cough, headache, muscle and/or joint aches and pains, sore throat, chills, runny nose, nasal congestion, conjunctivitis, dizziness, fatigue, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite (difficulty feeding for children), loss of sense of taste or smell, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing. Stay home if you have symptoms and monitor yourself.
- *Get tested:* [Learn more about testing](#) and regularly take the online self-assessment at [Saskatchewan.ca/COVID19](https://saskatchewan.ca/COVID19). Call HealthLine 811 or your physician for a referral or visit your local drive-thru testing site.
- *Care for yourself and others:* Anyone at any age can contract COVID-19. Be kind to each other and to health-care workers.
- *Download the COVID-19 Alert APP:* The Health Canada COVID Alert app is available to all Saskatchewan residents at no cost in the Apple and Google Play app store. The app is another tool available to help prevent the transmission of COVID-19 by letting people know of possible exposures without sharing any personal information. For more information, visit the [COVID-19 Apps webpage](#).
- Get immunized once it's available to you. The best vaccine to get is the one you can get in your arm.