



Yukon Communicable Disease Control  
#4 Hospital Road, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 3H8

## Memorandum

**Date:** 2021-05-28 **21-03**  
**To:** All Health Care Providers  
**From:** Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) & Yukon Communicable Disease Control (YCDC)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 provider update # 19

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Dear Colleagues:

As we witness the changing COVID-19 landscape with respect to variants of concern (VOC) in Canada and changes related to increasing immunization rates in the country, we wanted to provide some reminders and updates with respect to testing for COVID-19.

1. Get tests results online
2. YT epi update
3. Symptom presentation and testing
4. Abbott ID NOW™
5. COVID-19 immunization history and contact management
6. Federal COVID-19 testing for international travellers
7. On the horizon

### Get tests results online

This new service now links patients to COVID-19 test results in real-time using web-based access. This e-service includes all GeneXpert tests at WGH and all tests from BCCDC (NP/gargle). Results can be accessed through <https://yukon.ca/test-results-covid-19>. At this time, only negative results will be available. People with indeterminate and positive results will continue to be contacted by YCDC directly. The goal of this service is to support timely access to low-risk test results and build a sustainable long-term approach for this testing.

Of note is that this service has some important conditions for access:

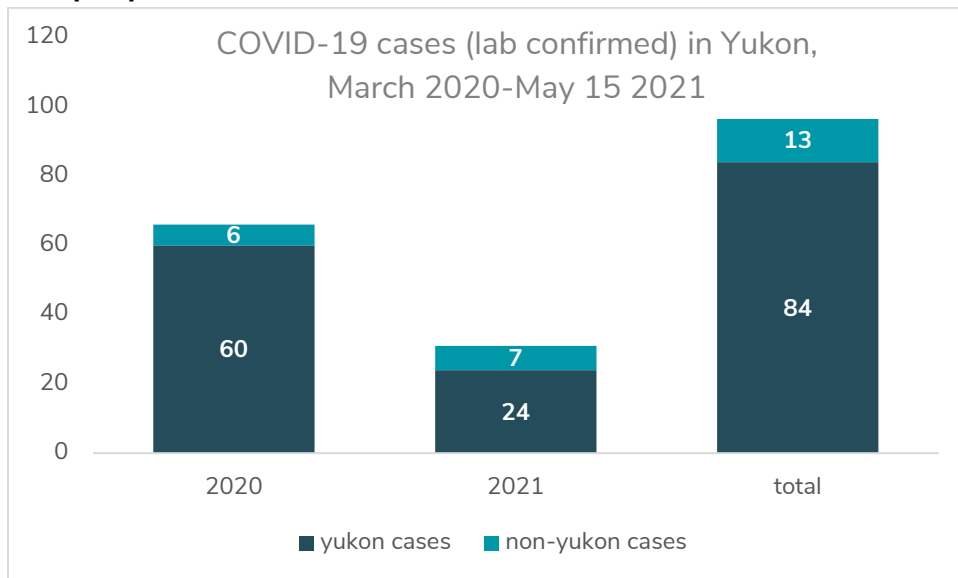
- 1) you need to have a YHIS #

- 2) you need to be have internet access and be able to enter your information correctly
- 3) you need to have a clinical profile that supports a clear interpretation for next steps

Individuals not meeting these criteria will continue to need to have their test results called to them as per current practice.

Small cards, to direct patients to this website have been distributed to high volume COVID-19 testing sites. If you are interested in having these in your practice/clinic/facility please contact YCDC directly at 667-8323.

**YT epi update**



There is an increasing proportion of cases of COVID 19 within YT that are not residents of Yukon. We anticipate this trend to continue and possibly increase with changing border measures.

To date, only Yukon resident cases are currently displayed on the public website. This means non-Yukon cases that may be diagnosed in Yukon and are within the territory during their infectious period may not be made public. It is important to note that YCDC and the MOH team work with other jurisdictions to ensure that any COVID-19 case or contact in territory is appropriately managed. Nevertheless, Yukon’s communication approach is under review to support a complete and transparent communication of risk to both providers and the public.

All COVID-19 cases that have undergone VOC testing since March 2021 have all resulted in finding of VOCs:

	Number of cases since March 2021	Number of cases with VOC testing	VOC result of B 1.1.7	VOC result of B.1.617	VOC result of P.1
YT cases	12	10	7	1	2
Non-YT cases	5	3	1	0	2

We will continue to see new cases and new types of variants, in part because of the natural evolution of viruses, as well as an incomplete global public health and medical countermeasures.

While VOCs have become the dominant strains of COVID-19 infections in jurisdictions in Canada, we haven't seen increasing cases lead to proportional increases in severity of cases. Most importantly, we have seen effective control of VOC spread, through our current public health measures.

In addition, there are many ongoing studies of vaccine effectiveness against VOCs, including within Canada. Current evidence (up to May 10, 2021, led by McMaster under the COVID-END initiative) finds that mRNA vaccines are effective against B.1.1.7. Preliminary evidence is also promising for the P.1 and B.1.617 variants. For detailed reviews of research on public health measures including detailed VOC and immunization evidence, see

<https://www.mcmasterforum.org/networks/covid-end/resources-to-support-decision-makers/Inventory-of-best-evidence-syntheses/public-health-measures>

### **Symptom presentation and testing**

There is a growing acknowledgment that clinical presentation can be a poor predictor of COVID-19 infection. The reasons are many, including varied clinical features, differences in presentation based on age, vaccine-modified illness, range in severity, and asymptomatic infection. For clinicians, this emphasizes the continued importance of laboratory testing to ascertain COVID-19 disease.

Please continue to maintain a low threshold for COVID-19 testing when patients present with compatible symptoms, regardless of vaccination status. Although the risk of disease acquisition is low in fully vaccinated people, breakthrough infections have occurred, particularly in settings favouring high disease transmission. For further reading, see references see page 5.

### **Abbott ID NOW™**

Abbott ID NOW™ has been rolled out at specific testing locations in Whitehorse (YCDC & CTAC). The Abbott ID NOW™ Instrument is a rapid (15 minute) molecular diagnostic test utilizing NAAT amplification for two target genes (N2 and E) for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. A screening program (asymptomatic testing) commenced in April at approved work places for workers who frequently travel in and out of Yukon. In addition, plans are underway to launch diagnostic testing (symptomatic testing) within rural Yukon and mine sites.

### **COVID-19 immunization history and contact management**

New internal guidance is in place for the interim management of contacts who are fully immunized with an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. This may result in persons being directed to self-monitor who previously would have been directed to self-isolate. There are multiple clinical

caveats and some pathways require asymptomatic testing. As per routine, isolation requirements post-contact are determined and directed by YCDC/MOH.

### **Federal COVID-19 testing for international travellers**

Federal testing program for international travellers has two testing times (Day 1 and Day 8) under contract with Switch Health. There is some variation in these processes, depending on whether the travel was by air or ground, and the location of the patient.

There are currently no courier companies or drop boxes available to collect or receive completed kits outside of Whitehorse. PHAC and Health Canada are trying to address this gap. HCPs in Yukon cannot accept these kits nor can they be dropped into regular Canada Post boxes. If anyone is calling or presenting for care related to this program, including where/how to drop off kits, please have the patient call YCDC directly. Please do not test international travellers without connecting with YCDC. This is required to ensure test results are appropriately linked to PHAC/National Microbial Laboratory to ensure compliance with this federal testing program.

### **On the horizon**

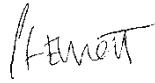
As you are aware, border changes have come into effect as of May 25 that take into consideration immunization history. It is important to remember that a slow methodical approach to easing of restrictions is required to ensure we are able to accurately assess the impacts of these changes. Within the Yukon context, a strong testing approach will be a key factor to support early identification of cases and clusters as apart of a multi-pronged ongoing risk assessment.

COVID-19 Screening Questions for Yukon *community health centres, medical clinics/outpatient facilities and mass immunization clinics* (Oct 8, 2020), *PPE recommendations for Yukon health centres* (Dec 14, 2020) and *PPE recommendations for medical clinics, outpatient facilities and home visits* (Dec 14, 2020) have been reviewed and there are no recommended changes to these documents. This review includes continuous masking which will remain in place and no changes in PPE use related to immunization status of clients/patient or HCPs. Numerous documents are currently in a review and updating process. This includes *Public Health management of cases and contacts*, *client hand-outs on self-isolation*, and *Provider FAQ: COVID-19 testing and clinical management*. Updated versions will be released in the next many weeks.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support,



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**Further reading on symptom presentation include:**

PHAC (Sept 2020). COVID-19 signs, symptoms and severity of disease: A clinician guide. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/signs-symptoms-severity.html>

Struyf T, Deeks JJ, Dinnes J, Takwoingi Y, Davenport C, Leeflang MM, et al. (July 2020) Signs and symptoms to determine if a patient presenting in primary care or hospital outpatient settings has COVID-19 disease. 2020(7). Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7386785/>

Public Health Ontario (Nov 2020). Coronavirus Disease 2019 and the Pediatric Population: An Umbrella Review. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2020/10/covid-19-pediatric-population-umbrella-review-synthesis.pdf?la=en>