

For Immediate Release | December 22, 2020

Interior Health Big White COVID-19 community cluster Tuesday update

KELOWNA – Interior Health has identified an additional 20 cases of COVID-19 linked to the Big White Mountain community cluster. The total number of cases identified to date is 96.

New cases are related to COVID-19 transmission that occurred within group housing, social events and gatherings.

Of the 96 known COVID-19 cases linked to this cluster, 69 reside on Big White Mountain. Sixty-four individuals have recovered and no one linked to this cluster is hospitalized.

“These new cases were expected, many of these new cases were on isolation already as they had shared their household with confirmed cases. What we hope to see in the days ahead is a reduction in the new cases which will show our case follow-up and the additional safety measures are working. I want to thank Big White leadership, local residents, staff, and guests for doing their part to limit further exposures” said Dr. Silvina Mema, medical health officer.

“We know that skiing and enjoying winter activities outdoors are important and we want this to be a great ski season. It is safe to enjoy the outdoors, and we ask that everyone follows all public health orders by staying to your local hill, skiing with your household bubble and following all safety protocols ski hills have in place.”

In collaboration with the Kootenay Boundary Regional District and community leadership, self-isolation housing on Big White Mountain has been established for people with COVID-19 to recover safely with support from Interior Health.

Everyone in the Big White community is reminded to avoid social gatherings and that socialization must be limited to immediate household bubbles. Please follow public health guidance such as physical distancing, washing your hands regularly and wearing a mask.

The risk remains low for families and individuals visiting Big White Mountain who follow public health guidance. In other words, it is safe to go to Big White when you stick to your immediate household bubble and avoid socializing and gathering, etc.

Interior Health is continuing outreach COVID-19 testing throughout the Big White community and environmental public health inspections.

Due to the statutory holidays, the next update on this outbreak will be Tuesday, Dec. 29.

We remain grateful to community leaders for their support, and remind everyone not to stigmatize or judge others who seek testing or test positive for COVID-19.

Everyone in all communities should remain vigilant in following COVID-19 precautions:

- Keep to your household bubbles and avoid social gatherings.

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- Stay home when you are sick and get tested if you have any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
 - Practise physical distancing and use a mask if you cannot.
 - Wash your hands often.

Booking a COVID-19 test:

Online: You can book an appointment online through the COVID-19 Test Booking Form:

<https://interiorhealthcovid.secureform.ca/index.php>

By phone: Call the COVID-19 Test Booking Line at 1-877-740-7747 for assistance with booking your test.

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