

COMMUNITY UPDATE #8

Preliminary Detection of a Variant of Concern Linked to COVID-19 Outbreak on NFN

April 8, 2021 – This notice is to advise the community of a recent development regarding the positive COVID-19 cases connected to the outbreak on NFN focused on the community of Duchesnay. Lab testing from Public Health has confirmed preliminary detection of a variant of concern (VOC) in these cases. The samples will be sent for further testing to identify the strain and nature of the variant with results expected in approximately three (3) weeks.

As noted in [Update #7](#) issued earlier today, there are currently seven (7) cases of COVID-19 that are known to be linked and that are still listed as active. When the outbreak was [declared on March 31st](#), there were five (5) positive cases of COVID-19 known to be linked. The origin of this outbreak cannot be confirmed at this time and the investigation remains ongoing.

There is currently no timeline for when the outbreak declaration will be lifted as that will depend on when the outbreak is contained. The outbreak will be considered contained when all positive cases are resolved, and it is confirmed that there is no further spread of COVID-19 in the community linked to these cases.

We cannot stress enough the importance of staying home, getting vaccinated and following public health measures at all times.

STAY HOME - The provincewide **stay-at-home** order that came into effect today requires that every individual remain at their home and on their property at all times unless necessary to leave for essential reasons such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services (including getting vaccinated), for outdoor exercise or for work that cannot be done remotely. This order is in effect for at least four weeks due to rapidly increasing case rates across Ontario and increased presence of VOCs.

GET VACCINATED - Vaccines prevent people from getting sick with COVID-19 or experiencing severe symptoms if they do come into contact with COVID-19 including a variant. It is important that we vaccinate as many people as possible to achieve herd immunity. NFN Health Services has conducted two mass vaccination clinics to date, with nearly 1,200 individuals being vaccinated on NFN.

If you have not yet received a 1st dose and would like to, you are encouraged to call the Health Centre at 705-753-3312 to register as soon as possible. If you have registered and have not yet received a call for a vaccine appointment, please contact the Health Centre to confirm your contact details.

You must register in advance and will then be called for a vaccine appointment based on priority and the time at which you registered. We will not be accepting walk-up/walk-in vaccine appointments. Everyone must be pre-registered.

Community Notice – April 8, 2021

Preliminary Detection of a VOC Linked to NFN Outbreak

FOLLOW PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES – Variants have been shown to spread more quickly and easily.

It is imperative that people continue to follow public health guidance to prevent further spread of virus, including washing hands, physical distancing, wearing a face covering that fully covers the nose, mouth and chin and staying within your households.

GET TESTED – Have symptoms? **Get tested right away, and until you have results, you and everyone else you live with must stay home.** *Do not go to work or school or visit anyone if you have symptoms.*

Residents who have symptoms or are concerned about a possible exposure to a positive case of COVID-19 are advised to get tested. *If you are concerned about exposure to a positive case due to the outbreak, mention that you are from Nipissing First Nation and they will prioritize you for a test.*

- **North Bay Regional Health Centre – 50 College Drive, North Bay**
Appointment Required – Call 705-474-8600 ext. 4110
Open 9am to 5pm (7 days a week)
Assessment Centre is in parking lot #9 for symptomatic patients or children 8 & under
Drive thru options available near Emergency entrance available for asymptomatic people
- **West Nipissing Assessment Centre – 219 O’Hara Street, Sturgeon Falls** (Community Complex)
Appointment Required – Call 705-580-2186
Open 12pm to 4pm (Monday to Friday)

Variants of Concerns

When a virus mutates and changes how it spreads and how sick people get, it can become a variant of concern. COVID-19 VOCs appear to spread more easily and quickly from person to person (they are more transmissible) and may cause more severe disease. For now, VOCs identified in Ontario include:

- B.1.1.7 variant first identified the United Kingdom
- B1351 variant first identified in South Africa
- P1 variant first identified in Brazil

Contacts

If you are concerned about a potential exposure, please contact Carole Lafantaisie, NFN Community Health Nurse at (705) 840-8830. Other inquiries may be directed to Kimberly Lalonde, Director of Health Services at (705) 498-3698. Visit nfn.ca/covid19 for regular updates and links to helpful information.