

The following guidance is offered to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 at gatherings. Planners should work with your local health team and the Environmental Health Officer on the use of this guidance adjusting it to meet the needs and circumstances of your community.

Key Points:

- Consider the level of risk when deciding to host a gathering.
- Avoid large events and gatherings, when possible.
- Promote vaccination—full vaccination reduces risk of serious illness and hospitalization.
- Promote healthy behaviors and maintain healthy environments to reduce risk when large gatherings are held.
- Be prepared if someone gets sick during or after the gathering.

1. COVID-19 Situation in Saskatchewan

Cases are increasing:

- Community spread has been reported in all areas of the province, including in First Nations.

The increase is being driven by the Delta variant which is very contagious: it spreads easily from one person to many others.

- It is 2 times as contagious as previous variants.

Most of the people in hospital with COVID-19 are unvaccinated people.

- Saskatchewan has one of the lowest rates of vaccination in Canada.
- Children infected with the Delta variant are more likely to have symptoms than they would have had with any of the other virus strains.
 - Remember: at this time there is no vaccine approved for children under the age of 12.

Fully vaccinated people can be infected by the Delta variant and can spread it to others.

- The majority of fully vaccinated people that are infected experience either no symptoms or only mild symptoms.



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- Fully vaccinated people can still have a serious illness when infected with the Delta variant.
 - Elders with underlying health conditions are at the greatest risk of serious, life-threatening illness.
- Remember: the fully vaccinated are much less likely to have a serious illness than the partially and unvaccinated. People should get fully vaccinated.

2. Consider the Risk

Several factors can increase the risk of attendees getting and spreading COVID-19 at a gathering. In combination, the following factors will create higher or lower amounts of risk:

- **The percentage of your community fully vaccinated**—Low vaccination rate in the community increases the risk of community spread and the risk of serious illness and hospitalizations. The Regional Medical Health Officer for FNIHB recommends that 85% of a community's eligible population, people 12 and older, should be fully vaccinated to help control community spread.
- **Number of COVID-19 cases in your community**—High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in your community and/or in the locations attendees are coming from increase the risk of infection and spread among attendees.
- **Setting of the event**—Indoor events, especially in places with poor ventilation, pose more risk than outdoor events.
- **Length of the event**—Events that last longer pose more risk than shorter events. Being within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more (over a 24-hour period) greatly increases the risk of becoming infected and requires quarantine.
- **Number and crowding of people at the event**— Events with more people increase the likelihood of being exposed. The size of the event should be determined based on whether attendees from different households can stay at least 6 feet (2 arm lengths) Physical distancing at events can reduce transmission risk—for example, blocking off seats or modifying room layouts.
- **Behavior of attendees during an event**— Events where people engage in behaviors such as interacting with others from outside their own household, singing, shouting,



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not maintaining physical distancing, or not wearing masks consistently and correctly, can increase risk.

Organizers should continue to assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone or cancel large gatherings, or significantly reduce the number of attendees. If organizers are unable to put safety measures in place during large gatherings, they should consider hosting a virtual event or postponing until the risk of spread has reduced.

The following are specific measures to help reduce the risk of COVID19 at Gatherings.

3. Postpone Gatherings When Possible

- Postponing will allow time to consider the risk of transmission and alternative ways to gather safely.

4. Limit the Number of Attendees

- Fewer people means less opportunity for the virus to spread (even if someone in attendance has COVID-19).
- A maximum of 30 people is recommended for indoor events.
- Ask people from outside the community to stay home. This will reduce the chance of COVID-19 spreading from one community to the next.
- If there is internet access available, consider doing a virtual event, which would allow people to participate without the risk of spreading the virus.
- Another option is to manage the number of people gathering at any one time is to set up a schedule for household or family groupings.

5. People Who Are Sick Should Stay Home

The symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Fever | • Chills | • Nausea or vomiting | • Shortness of breath |
| • Cough | • Runny Nose | • Diarrhea | • Difficulty breathing |
| • Muscle or joints aches & pains | • Pink eye | • Loss of appetite | |
| • Headache | • Dizziness | • Change in sense of smell or taste | |
| • Sore throat | • Fatigue | | |



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People, who have any of the symptoms of COVID-19 or just don't feel 100%, should not attend. It's the "walking" or "working" sick who are most likely to spread the illness to others.

6. Protect Elders & Community Members with Underlying Health Conditions

- Elders and anyone with chronic diseases and lung diseases should not attend gatherings.
 - They are at the greatest risk of a serious illness and hospitalization.
 - Nearly all the fully vaccinated people currently in hospital are older and have underlying health conditions.

7. Screen for COVID-19

- Your community health service can provide you with a screening questionnaire.
- Distribute the questionnaire through email and social media and ask people to use it before coming.
- Anyone who answers yes to any of the screening questions should stay home and call 811 for follow-up advice.
- A person waiting for COVID-19 test result should be self-isolating and not allowed in.
- If people will be gathering for multiple days, they should screen at the beginning of each day.
- During the event advise the gathering that anyone who starts to feel unwell should leave and contact 811 for advice.

Other options you may want to consider:

- Temperature checks before entry and during the day?
- Require proof of full vaccination?
- Require a Rapid COVID ID test prior to attending the event? These test kits can be requested by emailing: sac.testing-skfn.isc@canada.ca

8. Keep a List of Attendees

- Should a person or persons who attend the gathering become sick with COVID-19 it will be easier for public health officials to follow up with attendees and screen them for the illness.



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- The quicker public health officials can follow up, the fewer people will be put at risk of infections.

9. Physical Distancing

- Unless they are from the same household, people should stay 6 feet apart.
- This applies to both indoor and outdoor gatherings.
- Research shows this is a very effective way to reduce the risk of infection.

10. Masks Prevent the Spread

- Wearing a mask indoors and in crowded outdoor settings is one of the best ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Ask/require people to wear masks when indoors and/or when outdoors if they are unable to stay 6 feet from people from other households.
- Have masks available and encourage their use by all, including people who are fully vaccinated.

11. Frequent Hand Hygiene Helps Prevent COVID-19 (and other diseases)

- Encourage frequent hand washing or sanitizing with alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Hand Sanitizer should be easily accessible to youth and adults and available for use by children under the supervision by an adult.

12. Stay Outdoors as much as Possible

- Weather permitting, hold the gathering outdoors.
- There is a greater risk of the virus spreading indoors.

13. Socializing

- People should limit personal contact with non-household members
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging and kissing.
- Encourage spoken and/or non-contact greetings and goodbyes such as nods and waves.



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- While receiving lines are not recommended, if there is a receiving line, encourage mask wearing and the sanitizing of hands before and after going through the line.

14. Safe Meals & Food Services

- Food and drink services can increase the risk of exposure.
- If food is offered at a reception, have individual pre-packaged boxes or bags instead of a potluck, buffet, or family-style meal.
- Provide condiments and coffee/tea supplies in single service packages.
- Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.
- Unless they are eating, people seated at a table with non-household members should wear a non-medical mask.
- Non-household members at a table should sit 6 feet apart.
- Limit the number of people at each table and/or assign tables to household groups.

15. Encourage Self-Monitoring After the Gathering

- Advise attendees to watch for symptoms for 14 days after the gathering.
- If they develop symptoms, they should immediately self-isolate and call 811 or their Community Health Nurse to make arrangements for testing.

16. Specific Public Health Advice for Funerals and Wakes

Funeral gatherings and the spiritual traditions that guide them are important to the family of the deceased and the community. Below are a few suggestions to help minimize the spread of COVID-19 during funerals and wakes. These are in addition to the guidance listed above.

- If there is an active outbreak in the community or surrounding area, limit the funeral to just family members.
- If there is internet access available, consider doing a virtual funeral, which would allow people to participate without the risk of spreading the virus.
- Avoid touching, hugging, or kissing the body of a deceased person.
 - All contact with the deceased increases the chance of passing COVID-19 from one mourner to another.
- Anyone who has contact with the body should wash or sanitize their hands before and after.
- Try to limit personal contact between mourners from different households.



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Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority Inc.



Participant Attendance List

Name of Event: _____

Date of Event _____

	Last Name	First Name	Phone Contact	Community of Resident	Time In	Time Out
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Please fax completed list to NITHA Public Health at (306) 953-5020

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