

Sioux Lookout and Lac Seul area COVID-19 situation update

Joint Release: May 7, 2021

Currently, there is increased risk of COVID-19 in both Lac Seul First Nation and Sioux Lookout and prevention measures need to be strictly followed. Be assured that many local partners are working together to ensure public safety. The situation is serious, but we must remain calm, careful, and kind.

What is being done in response to the increase in cases?

Stay at Home Order / Lockdown

Sioux Lookout is under the provincial Stay at Home Order and Lac Seul is under a strict lockdown. This means that people should only leave their home for essential purposes. In addition, you must not gather with anyone that you do not live with. These measures have been put in place because COVID-19 is most likely to spread when getting within 2 metres of someone with the virus. The OPP and Canadian Rangers are encouraging compliance and are providing education, masks, and other COVID-19 prevention support to those who need it along with enforcing provincial regulations.

Case and Contact Management

When new cases are identified, they are told to isolate, and all of their high-risk close contacts are asked to get tested and self-isolate. As expected, some of the close contacts who get tested may also then receive positive test results. If you are considered a case or a high-risk contact, you will be informed directly. Those who have been told to self-isolate have been given clear instructions and are being monitored to support any health needs they may have and ensure compliance. Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFHA) and Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) work together to ensure this process happens quickly and according to regulations.

Vaccinations

Getting vaccinated is a proven method to effectively prevent the spread of COVID-19. Vaccination clinics are being offered in Sioux Lookout and Lac Seul First Nation through partnerships involving NWHU, SLFNHA, Kenora District Services Board (KDSB), Lac Seul First Nation, Independent First Nations Alliance (IFNA) Keewaytinook Okimakanak, Shibogama Tribal Council, Matawa Tribal Council, Windigo First Nations Council, and the Nishnawbe Gamik Friendship Centre, with a goal of vaccinating all eligible residents by the end of May. Remember that once vaccinated, it takes 2-3 weeks to build immunity after each dose and you must continue to practise prevention measures to protect others, even after you have had two doses. Many residents have been vaccinated already and anyone who is eligible is encouraged to get their shot.

Testing and Isolation support

Testing for COVID-19 is led by Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre with outreach supports from KDSB. Local agencies like KDSB, Sioux Lookout Supported Housing, Sioux Lookout Out of the Cold Program, and SLFNHA are working together to provide isolation space for people who are unable to self-isolate at home. There is ongoing work taking place to support

those who experience under-housing or other social issues to ensure they can isolate and get tested if needed.

Leadership working together

The Municipality of Sioux Lookout and the Leadership of Lac Seul First Nation meet regularly and receive guidance from both NWHU and SLFNHA among other agencies to make decisions and implement measures to keep residents of the area protected.

What can local residents do to protect themselves and our communities?

Follow prevention measures

COVID-19 remains a risk in all of our communities, especially with the presence of variants of concern (VOC) in the region. The good news is that there are things you can do to protect yourself from COVID-19. It is very unlikely that a person will get the virus if they do not get near someone who has it. Not all people with the virus have symptoms, which is why people must stay 2 metres away from anyone they do not live with. Continue to wear a mask, wash your hands often, and do not gather indoors or outdoors with anyone other than members of your household. By following these measures, in addition to getting vaccinated, you significantly lower your chance of getting COVID-19.

Be COVID-kind:

We encourage kindness at this time and remind the public the situation we are facing can happen anywhere and in any population. You cannot see COVID-19 just by looking at a person and the virus does not discriminate. When you, your family member, or friend gets diagnosed with COVID-19, it can be scary. At these times, people may need extra compassion, support, and empathy. We are all in this together and by treating people with respect and compassion, everyone in the community wins. Stay safe and thank you for doing your part.

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Sent on behalf of:

Lac Seul First Nation
Municipality of Sioux Lookout
Northwestern Health Unit
Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority
Independent First Nations Alliance (IFNA)
Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre
Sioux Lookout Out of the Cold Program
Nishnawbe Gamik Friendship Centre
Windigo First Nations Council
Shibogama First Nations Council
First Step Women's Shelter
Kenora District Services Board
Community Living Dryden-Sioux Lookout
Ontario Provincial Police
Canadian Rangers