



NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE



NORTH ISLAND COLLEGE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN

September 2021





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Introduction

This Communicable Disease Plan is designed to promote the health and safety of North Island College (NIC) employees and students. It provides information that can be used to prevent the contraction and spread of communicable diseases and support the appropriate response to a communicable disease outbreak.

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another.

NIC's Vice President Finance & College Services in conjunction with NIC's Director, Public Affairs & Communications and the Vice President, Students and Community Engagement will alert the campus community when there is a communicable disease threat affecting the college community.

This Plan guides NIC's communicable disease prevention, mitigation and response activities. In the event of an emergency, NIC will work with Island Health, notify the college community of the emergency, take actions to protect the health and safety of students, employees, visitors and contractors; and provide additional guidance if necessary.

Scope

Communicable diseases falling within the scope of this Plan are those typically caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites and normally spread through direct or indirect human contact or through the consumption of contaminated food/water.

Examples of communicable diseases include but are not limited to:

- Coronavirus
- Hepatitis A
- Norovirus
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Tuberculosis

Prevent

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace.

Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, innate immunity and acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases.

Not all communicable diseases are treatable, nor are current treatments guaranteed to protect against a communicable disease. Therefore, it is important to limit the spread of a communicable disease before it has the potential to cause serious illness or disease by implementing the additional measures:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently;
- Use proper cough and sneeze etiquette;
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces at least once a day;
- Practice a healthy lifestyle; exercise, eat a balanced diet and get sufficient sleep;
- Handle and prepare food safely: keep foods at a correct temperature, cook foods (especially meat) thoroughly, wash produce and observe expiration dates;
- Avoid public places, work, or school when sick to prevent the spread of communicable disease; and
- Follow provincial public health guidelines. NIC supports appropriate immunizations and vaccinations as directed by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) or your medical provider.

Faculty and staff should familiarize themselves with health benefits available through their NIC benefits plan, for more info contact the Human Resources Department.

Identify

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within the workplace.

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of a communicable disease and understanding the modes of transmission is the first step in reducing the incidence of disease associated with communicable diseases.

Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated at the onset of most communicable diseases typically include fever and other flu-like symptoms: achiness, upset stomach, fatigue, fever and headaches.

When traveling, be aware of communicable disease threats; certain communicable diseases are endemic to certain regions of the world.

Plan

It is important to have a plan in place within your unit or department to respond to staffing and other business issues that may arise during a communicable disease emergency. A unit plan should:

- Designate employees who will work during a communicable disease emergency either onsite or at an alternate location (including home);
- Cross-train staff to provide levels of backup for critical positions;
- Develop telework agreements with employees who may need to work from home or an alternate location; and
- Create a working group to discuss, and prepare for, other potential department-specific issues that may arise during an emergency.

Respond

The following procedures should be followed whenever a communicable disease emergency such as a regional communicable disease outbreak, pandemic, or public health emergency is declared by local, provincial or national officials. For all other routine, seasonal, or individual health issues, consult your health-care provider.

Routine, seasonal and individual health issues DO NOT need to be reported to college officials unless advised to do so by your health-care provider.

EMPLOYEES

If you are a faculty or staff member who believes you have a communicable disease or symptoms, you should:

- Seek medical attention if necessary;
- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others:
 - Do not return to work until advised to do so by a health-care professional or, in the absence of medical consultation, do not return to work for the duration of the illness and you are 24-hours symptom free;
 - Notify your supervisor of your medical absence; this may require medical documentation to support your absence, which may benefit from support of your union and Human Resources;
- Follow provincial health guidance for travel recommendations;
- Follow processes and procedures outlined in POLICY 3-03 if you need to cancel instructional activities.

SUPERVISORS

Supervisors who become aware of an employee under their supervision who exhibits communicable disease symptoms or is diagnosed with a communicable disease must not release the employee's name, identifying information, or condition to other employees. Questions related to employee absences regarding communicable disease should be directed to Human Resources.

STUDENTS

A student who is diagnosed with or believes they have a communicable disease should:

- Seek medical attention from their primary care provider;
- Stay at home when sick and avoid close contact with others:
 - Do not return to campus until advised to do so by a health-care professional or for the duration of the illness and you are 24-hours symptom free;
 - Notify your instructors. If you are a student employee, notify your on-campus supervisor, as necessary. You may require medical documentation to support your absence, and may benefit from support of the student union (NISU) or NIC Student Affairs.
- Follow provincial health guidance for travel recommendations.

RETURNING TO WORK/CAMPUS

Prior to returning to work or campus, students and employees should take precautions to prevent spreading communicable disease by ensuring that symptoms have passed as per medical advice.

Remain at home if contagious, and, if necessary, consult a health-care professional for guidance or clearance to return to work or school prior to returning to the college.

During a college-wide communicable disease outbreak, a written statement indicating that students or employees may return to work or school from an attending physician or primary care provider may be required before returning to the college.

All student and employee medical information is treated as private and confidential and will be handled in compliance with legal requirements and professional ethical standards.

Prevention

North Island College will reduce ongoing communicable disease by keeping the following measures in place and periodically reviewing their effectiveness to assist with ongoing prevention:

- Signage reminding people to wash hands frequently will remain in place;
- Occupational Health and Safety committees will review Communicable Disease Plans annually or as PHO guidance changes;
- Appropriate ventilation systems are in place, routinely maintained and inspected;
- Plexi-glass shields will remain in place in existing areas;
- The need for masks, foot pumps (with hand sanitizer), cleaning materials, routine cleaning of high-touch locations and other safety measures will be evaluated with provincial health guidance and available as recommended.
- Infection prevention and control inspection will take place under direction of Health and Safety; and
- Refer to the Return to Campus Guidelines for specific requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Flu shot clinics will continue to be offered during flu season.

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Resources

For additional information about a specific communicable disease including symptoms, prevention, treatment and communicable disease outbreaks, please visit the following:

- BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual: [Communicable Disease Control Manual](https://www.bccdc.ca) (bccdc.ca)
- Island Health Communicable Disease Control and Prevention: [Communicable Disease Prevention & Control | Island Health](#)
- Your personal health-care provider(s) or physician

APPENDIX A:

Communicable Disease Symptoms

Name	Vaccine Preventable?	Description of Symptoms
Measles (Rubella)	Yes	Symptoms: high fever; cough; runny nose; red/watery eyes; tiny white spots (Koplik spots) in mouth; rash Transmission: coughing and sneezing; virus can live up to two hours in contaminated air or on a surface
Meningitis	Yes	BACTERIAL Symptoms: fever; headache; stiff neck; nausea; vomiting; sensitivity to light; confusion Transmission: germs spread person-to-person (depends on type of bacteria) VIRAL Symptoms: fever; headache; stiff neck; sensitivity to bright light; sleepiness or trouble waking up from sleep; nausea; irritability; vomiting; lack of appetite; lethargy Transmission: caused by other viruses like mumps, measles, influenza, etc.
Mumps	Yes	Symptoms: fever; headache; muscle aches; tiredness; loss of appetite; swollen/tender salivary glands approximately 16-18 days after infection Transmission: coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects
Norovirus	No	Symptoms: diarrhea; vomiting; nausea; stomach pain Transmission: contaminated food or drink; touching contaminated surfaces and then putting fingers in mouth; having direct contact with someone who is infected
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	Yes	Symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties Transmission: Person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects
Influenza	Yes	Symptoms: fever; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle/ body aches; headaches; fatigue; sometimes vomiting and diarrhea Transmission: person-to-person via droplets
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Yes	Symptoms: fever; tiredness; loss of appetite; headache; itchy, fluid-filled blisters Transmission: touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from the blisters

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