



DOUGLAS COLLEGE

Communicable Disease Prevention and Response Plan

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Introduction

Protecting the health and well-being of students, faculty, staff and campus visitors remains the top priority of Douglas College. This Communicable Disease Prevention and Response Plan (CDPRP) is designed to promote the health and safety of college employees and students by providing information on how to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases and 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 ([see list of common communicable diseases in the appendix of this document](#)).

Safety, Security and Risk Management (SSRM), in conjunction with **Human Resources (HR)** and **Marketing & Communication (MCO)**, will alert the campus community when Public Health has determined there is potential for a communicable disease outbreak affecting members of the college community. Douglas College will work with the investigating health authority and notify the college community of the potential emergency (if recommended by Public Health).

The College will follow all recommendations recommended by a provincial health authority or the public health office. The College will also **take all** protective actions as indicated by a risk assessment to protect the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Through this process, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the privacy of College community members under Douglas College Privacy Policy.

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 the consumption of contaminated food/water. Examples include but are not limited to:

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

Prevention

Preventing communicable diseases involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of transmission at Douglas College locations. Vaccines, antibiotics, antivirals, innate immunity, and/or acquired immunity can provide some protection against certain communicable diseases.

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

- Wash hands/use hand sanitizer often
- Use proper cough/sneeze etiquette
- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces
- Maintain appropriate immunizations and vaccinations
- Complete self-checks and avoid public places, work, or school when sick
- Wear masks or other protective equipment as required/recommended or by personal choice
- Handle/prepare food safely: keep foods at correct temperatures, cook foods (especially meat) thoroughly, wash produce, and observe expiration dates
- Follow universal precautions when working with bloodborne pathogens

General Campus Preventative Measures

Core public health measures and on-campus tailored infection prevention and control measures can both be used and will be followed to support safe on-campus activities. The measures outlined below are guided by evidence, the expert advice of public health professionals and risk assessments completed by the College:

- **Daily self-administered health checks** are a personal responsibility. Individuals experiencing symptoms of a communicable disease should stay home and consult with their healthcare provider for medical advice as necessary.
- **Non-medical masks** could be recommended by public health or the College, or mandated by legislation, in some circumstances, depending on local communicable disease transmission rates. Such advice should be followed when provided.
- **Building ventilation** (HVAC) systems will be operated and maintained following WorkSafeBC requirements and relevant **American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers** (ASHRAE) Standards for indoor air quality.
- **Hand hygiene** will be actively promoted. Hand sanitization stations will be placed at regular intervals throughout common spaces and the entrances/exits to all public spaces.
- **Routine cleaning** of educational and public spaces will occur according to regular daily cleaning schedules. The need for enhanced cleaning will be directed by the public health office.
- **Enhanced cleaning** of spaces used on any of our campuses and worksites will be completed when an exposure event has occurred that warrants such cleaning.

Faculty and Staff Considerations

Douglas College will take a multi-faceted approach to ensure employees, students and contractors are informed of new or updated workplace health and/or safety procedures, and how these processes are designed to protect the entire college community from communicable disease.

Communication methods may include any of the following:

- Special orientation sessions
- Informational postings on DC Connect
- Special team meetings
- Email messages from the worker's responsible administrator
- Campus signage strategically placed to support any new/updated workplace health/safety procedures
- Special meetings with contractors and/or their employees to discuss any changes and how they are affected
- Other means as deemed appropriate

All employees and contractors should follow Douglas College's health and safety prevention measures, which will continue to be guided by public health as well as internal risk assessments. If an employee disagrees with or has questions or concerns regarding the prevention measures implemented by the College, they are encouraged to discuss these concerns with their responsible administrator, a member of SSRM (safety@douglascollege.ca), or with a Joint Health & Safety Committee member/representative.

Where applicable, such discussions can utilize the **SOP-149 – Refusal of Unsafe Work** to guide resolution. The College will also administer formal requests for accommodation, including medical accommodation, based on the individual circumstances and per collective agreements, legal obligations and established accommodation review timelines.

Identify

Signs and Symptoms of Communicable Diseases

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases 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 communicable diseases and understanding the modes of transmission is the first step in reducing the incidence of diseases associated with communicable diseases.

Signs and symptoms will vary depending on the disease, but common characteristics associated with the onset of the communicable diseases that people are most likely to face typically include fever and other flu-like symptoms: achiness, upset stomach, fatigue, fever, and headaches. When travelling abroad, be aware of local communicable disease concerns as specific ones are endemic to certain regions of the world. Also, be sure to follow any government-prescribed guidance upon your return to the country.

Cooperation with Local Public Health Officials

During periods of elevated risk where Public Health officials issue guidance, notices, or orders related to Douglas College's region and industry, it may be necessary to implement appropriate measures under the guidance of Public Health. These measures are in addition to the general measures for communicable disease prevention that should be in place at all times.

Public health authorities are responsible for determining notification processes and requirements for confirmed cases of any communicable disease outbreak. Douglas College has been and may be asked in the future to assist public health authorities in notifying close contacts, assisting in the identification of people who may have been exposed, distributing materials prepared by the public health authorities, or supporting public notification efforts.

The SSRM department is responsible for monitoring and reviewing any communicable disease-related information issued by either the Fraser Health or Provincial Medical Health Officers. This process will be carried out at least every week and more frequently as specific situations demand. SSRM is responsible for coordinating communications between Public Health and other departments of the College.

Plan

Within the College, all departmental Business Continuity plans must include strategies to respond to staffing and other business issues that may arise during a communicable disease emergency, or whenever employees are unable to attend work due to illness.

A unit/department Business Continuity plan should address:

- Designation of employees who will work during communicable disease emergencies either onsite or at an alternate location (including at home).
- Cross-training staff to provide levels of backup for critical positions.
- Developing Work from Home agreements with those staff who may have to work from home or an alternate location, following the College's *Working from Home* policy and supporting procedures.
- Considering other potential department-specific issues that may arise during an emergency and include them in the departmental business continuity plan (e.g. impact of a communicable disease on a conference or other planned event, the potential need for ad-hoc Work from Home (for those whose symptoms are subsided and may want to begin working again but cannot return to the workplace)).

Respond

The following procedures will 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.

Employees

Employees (staff, faculty, and administrators) who are diagnosed with or believe they have a communicable disease should:

- Seek medical attention if necessary.
- Inform your Supervisor, Health & Safety (safety@douglascollege.ca), and Human Resources of your situation and relay any pertinent information provided by your healthcare provider.
- Stay home when sick and avoid close contact with others to the extent possible.
 - 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 24-hours after symptoms abate;
 - Notify your supervisor;
 - If scheduled to teach, follow Faculty/Departmental procedures for class cancellations due to illness; and
 - Record your time away from work as sick leave.
- To limit the spread of communicable disease, avoid travelling when sick unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a health care professional.
- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed.
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease emergency by monitoring reliable media outlets.

Supervisor, Manager or Responsible Administrator

People 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. All employee healthcare concerns must be forwarded to Human Resources. Supervisors and employees can contact Human Resources with any questions or concerns they may have regarding workplace issues surrounding communicable diseases.

Supervisors, managers, and responsible administrators should provide information/support to staff and students by:

- Encouraging those with symptoms of a communicable disease (e.g., fever or chills, coughing, diarrhea) to stay home when sick.
- Providing resources on how to access vaccinations for vaccine-preventable illnesses.
 - Take into consideration those who cannot be vaccinated. In rare instances, their physicians may advise some individuals that they should not be vaccinated due to a medical condition, such as a severe allergy to parts of the vaccine. Some individuals may choose not to be vaccinated due to other reasons.

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 to the extent possible.

- Not return to class or clinical/practicum work until advised to do so by a health care professional or for the duration of the illness and 24-hours after symptoms abate; and
- Notify your instructors, supervisor, and family as necessary.
- Avoid travelling to limit the spread of a communicable disease unless otherwise deemed appropriate by a health care professional.
- Use antibiotics and antivirals appropriately and exactly as prescribed.
- Maintain awareness of the situation and the progression and nature of the communicable disease by monitoring reliable media outlets.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Douglas College recognizes and respects the personal worth, dignity and diversity of each member of the Douglas College community. Students and employees who identify as Black, Indigenous or other people of colour (BIPOC) may fear racism related to communicable disease outbreaks. Douglas College is committed to working with students, employees and community members to create culturally safe and inclusive campus communities free of racism.

Indigenous Persons (First Nations, Métis and Inuit)

Indigenous people are often disproportionately impacted by communicable disease outbreaks and may face elevated health risks linked to social determinants (e.g. income, culture, access to health services, etc.). As such, they may maintain increased safety measures, and experience heightened anxiety related to communicable diseases.

- Douglas College will continue to work collaboratively with local First Nations and Indigenous community partners to ensure that the health and safety of Indigenous students and communities are taken into account during communicable disease outbreaks.
- Douglas College will work with local First Nations and any students who are impacted by the closure of their communities to ensure access to academic programming and services.

Returning to Work/School after Recovery

Before returning to work or school after recovery from a communicable disease, students and employees should take precautions to prevent secondary spread by ensuring symptoms have passed. Remain at home if contagious; if necessary, consult a health care professional for guidance or clearance to return to the college.

During a college-wide communicable disease outbreak, students and employees may return to work or school after consulting with a health care professional for clearance to return to the College.

Student Supports /Accommodation

Douglas College will continue to follow established accommodation or academic concession mechanisms to support students who cannot physically be on campus due to a communicable disease (e.g., they are ill, adhering to quarantine rules, self-isolating, attending a vaccine appointment).

Similarly, the College will continue to ensure that students with disabilities are supported in their educational pursuits with appropriate academic accommodations. The College will work collaboratively with the Douglas Student Union (DSU) and partner organizations to reinforce communicable disease-safe behaviours both on and off-campus.

Program-Specific Considerations

In the case of community outbreaks of communicable diseases, students and instructors will be expected to follow guidelines for specific settings where work-integrated learning placements occur.

This includes clinical, teaching, internships, co-op placements, and other community-engaged work placements. Douglas College departments should be knowledgeable of program-specific communicable disease guidance and ensure that student and instructor risk is minimized in these placements.

Douglas College will continue to rely on public health guidelines developed and updated for other sectors (e.g., competitive sports, use of athletic and recreational facilities, public transit, travel, retail services, etc.) as they apply to operations at the College.

Confidentiality

All student and employee medical information is private and confidential and handled in compliance with legal requirements, professional ethical standards and the College Privacy Policy.

Resources

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

- BCCDC Communicable Disease Control Manual: [Communicable Disease Control Manual \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca)
- Fraser Health Communicable Disease Control: [Communicable Disease Control \(fraserhealth.ca\)](https://www.fraserhealth.ca)
- Your personal health care provider(s) or physician

Appendices

Appendix A: Communicable Disease Reference Chart

Name	Description of Symptoms	Period of Communicability	Common Actions Recommended	Vaccine-Preventable
Measles (Rubella)	Symptoms: high fever; cough; runny nose; red/watery eyes; tiny white spots in the mouth; rash Transmission: coughing/sneezing; the virus can live up to two hours in contaminated air/on surfaces	Usually 4 days before to 4 days after onset of rash.	Exclude for at least 7 days after onset of rash.	Yes
Meningitis	BACTERIAL Symptoms: fever; headache; stiff neck; nausea; vomiting; sensitivity to light; confusion Transmission: germs spread person-to-person (depends on the 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.	Depends on the type of infectious agent.	Exclude until a medical recommendation for return.	Yes
Mumps	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	From 6–7 days before to 9 days after the onset of parotitis (painful swelling of salivary glands located between the ear and jaw).	Can safely return to work/school five days after the appearance of signs and symptoms (with medical clearance).	Yes
Norovirus	Symptoms: diarrhea; vomiting; nausea; stomach pain Transmission: contaminated food/drink; touching contaminated surfaces then putting fingers in the mouth; direct contact with an infected person	From the moment they start feeling ill to at least three days after they have recovered.	Can safely return to work or school 24 hours after the symptoms have resolved.	No
Coronavirus	Symptoms: fever; cough; shortness of breath; breathing difficulties Transmission: Person-to-person via droplets, coughing, sneezing, or talking; sharing items; touching contaminated objects	Most infectious in the early stages, 1-2 days before the symptoms begin. Asymptomatic persons can also spread the virus.	Self-isolate for at least 5 days from the day you noticed symptoms, the patient feels better and they have no fevers.	Yes
Influenza	Symptoms: fever; cough; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose; muscle/body aches; headaches; fatigue; sometimes vomiting and diarrhea Transmission: person-to-person via droplets	From 1 day before up to 5-7 days after onset of symptoms.	Exclude until 24-hours after symptoms resolve.	Yes
Varicella (Chicken Pox)	Symptoms: fever; tiredness; loss of appetite; headache; itchy, fluid-filled blisters Transmission: touching or breathing in the virus particles that come from the blisters	As long as 5 but usually 1-2 days before the onset of rash to not more than 5-days after the first crop of lesions appear.	Exclude until all lesions have dried or crusted, usually 5-6 days after the eruption of the first crop of lesions.	Yes

Appendix B: Revision History

Date:	What's Changed	Notes
9-May-22	Housekeeping changes; language allowing College to mandate masks based on community results	