

Media Release

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Islanders urged to follow good COVID-19 practice ahead of winter

As winter approaches and temperatures drop, health officials are urging Islanders to continue following the good practice they have adopted as part of living responsibly with COVID.

In recent days, active case numbers have increased and there have been two hospital admissions.

Case numbers will rise and fall, and this in itself is not necessarily a cause for concern given the very high levels of vaccination in the community. However, some of the recent cases have led to concerns for health officials that some of the fundamental guidance for reducing the spread of COVID-19 is not being followed. For example, there is evidence of people being symptomatic and not reporting these symptoms but instead continuing as normal in the community for several days, transmitting the virus as they do so.

Dr Peter Rabey, Medical Director, said

“Our vaccination levels have dramatically reduced the number of people who will become seriously ill if they catch COVID. They have reduced transmission too, but transmission can still happen, it is still possible to spread the virus. So alongside the vaccines, we’ve continued to advise people that they should practice good hand hygiene, respect each others’ personal space, avoid poorly ventilated or crowded spaces where possible. Most of all we’ve urged people to stay at home if they have any symptoms and report them so they can be tested.

Those continue to be extremely important in reducing the spread of the virus. If we don’t follow any of those measures, cases will rise, especially as it gets colder and we’re all spending more time indoors.

More than anything, I’d urge people to think of the most vulnerable in our community. The vaccine will give them much better protection, but it doesn’t make them immune. We could still see some people become very ill. Even if that’s only a small percentage, if the number of active cases increases then so will the numbers needing hospital care.”

Dr Nicola Brink, Director of Public Health, said

“We’ve been very successful in managing the number of cases while we’ve relaxed our border restrictions. But that’s only because we’ve taken responsibility as individuals, as families, and as businesses to reduce our own personal risk. However, we have seen an increase in the number of cases over the last few days. Case number may fluctuate, but it’s really important we don’t become complacent just as we head into the winter months, if for no other reason than to protect the most vulnerable Islanders. We cannot forget that in some cases this can still be a potentially deadly virus. Many of us will have elderly or vulnerable friends and relatives, we may work alongside them, we may visit them in care settings, and we should take seriously our responsibility in keeping them safe.”

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Notes to Media

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