

MEMO

To / Aux :	* Travelers to Nunavik	* Voyageurs à destination du Nunavik
From:	Marie Rochette, Director of Public Health/Directrice de santé publique	
Date :	December 18 th , 2021	
Subject / Objet:	Rapid increase of COVID-19 Omicron variant cases: new actions in place to protect the region as of December 19, 2021	

Context

The past days have seen an important and fast increase in the COVID-19 Omicron variant cases in the province of Quebec. In order to delay as long as possible, the introduction of the COVID-19 Omicron variant in the Nunavik region, new restrictions apply to the traveler program.

The Omicron variant is significantly more contagious than the previous strains of COVID-19 and may pose a significant stress on the health care system. At this time, it does not appear to be more virulent. The protection offered by 2 doses of the vaccine against Omicron variant is significantly improved by obtaining a booster, or third COVID-19 shot, of either Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.

Therefore, **travelers that have not obtained their booster in the past 14 days, including people under the age of 18, are asked to quarantine for 10 days to ensure maximal protection of Nunavik communities.**

Individuals who want to be protected should get their booster vaccine dose as soon as possible.

Members of the same household of a traveler not adequately protected (who did not receive a booster or who had COVID-19 without 2 doses of vaccines) must also be in quarantine.

All recommendations are effective as of Sunday December 19, 2021.

Other requirements of the traveler program remain unchanged.

Recommendations

1) Quarantine is mandatory for all travelers, except those who have received their booster / third COVID-19 shot (COVID-19 booster shot needs to be received at least 14 days prior to travel).

*An individual who has been infected with COVID-19 confirmed by a lab-test or an IDNOW test and that had two doses of COVID-19 vaccine is considered to have a protection equivalent to those who have received a booster.

If the traveler is not able to isolate from other household members during his/her quarantine, those who are not vaccinated or received only one or two doses have to stay in quarantine with the traveler. Household members who have received 3 doses of the vaccine don't have to quarantine.

Critical workers can exit quarantine to go to work only if their absence causes a break or a significant reduction in services which would be prejudicial to citizens. They must remain in quarantine outside of work.

For detailed quarantine rules, please refer to the following document:

https://nrhss.ca/sites/default/files/covid19/general_quarantaine_instructions_2021-12-17_EN.pdf

2) Rapid tests will be distributed at the airport, starting at the beginning of the week. All travelers, including those who received their booster shot, are required to test themselves every 48h from their day of departure (day 0-2-4-6 and 8). Travelers are still required to get tested at the nursing/CLSC on day 5.

A person may choose to do the first test (day 0) prior to boarding the plane or after their arrival at home.

A person who has a positive test on the rapid test should isolate (if not already in quarantine) and call the Info health Line to book a confirmation test at the nursing/CLSC as soon as possible. It is estimated that about 1 test out of 200 may be a false positive.

The household of a person who has a positive rapid test should isolate (if not already in quarantine) while waiting for the confirmation test. They will be asked to get tested with the traveler.

Children under 1 year old are exempt from the test

Rapid tests can be used for children aged 1 to 10 and are generally well tolerated. The decision to test a child less than 10 years old at home should be made by the parent or the guardian. A test at the nursing/CLSC 5 days after their arrival is strongly recommended.

Travelers with past infection

Those who have had a positive test for COVID-19 in the last 3 months should not get tested. They are still asked to quarantine if they didn't receive 2 doses of the vaccine.

*Note that the vaccine passport remains unchanged for the moment (2 doses are needed to travel).