



Nunavut's Path: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is Nunavut's plan different than other jurisdictions and not mapping out a clear direction for reopening?

When the Government of Nunavut (GN), under advisement from the Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), began the process of deciding how to best ease restrictions, we had to recognize that Nunavut's path to easing measures was going to be different than other jurisdictions. The past couple of months have made it obvious that the situation can change quickly and much of our actions will need to be adjusted accordingly. With that in mind, we wanted a framework that would allow us to respond rapidly. We also wanted to be transparent and clear with Nunavummiut regarding our process and not set expectations that could not be met because of a change in the situation.

2. What makes Nunavut different?

- We are the largest and most remote jurisdiction in the country, which creates challenges when responding to cases of COVID-19.
- Our social determinants of health (i.e. high smoking rates, crowded housing), increase the risk of viral transmission and complications.
- Unlike other provinces and territories, Nunavut must consider what is happening in five other jurisdictions that we rely on for medical and business travel, cargo and food delivery and for access to other parts of the country.

3. How does Nunavut's plan work?

On June 1, the CPHO will begin the process of loosening restrictions in Nunavut. Instead of identifying when each restriction could be lifted, the GN chose an approach that allows for an informed, flexible assessment of the path forward. Every two weeks, the CPHO will be able to use the most up to date data on both what is happening in territory and in the rest of Canada, to make changes that will minimize the risk to Nunavummiut. The CPHO will then decide if there is a need to re-introduce or increase restrictions, pause for more assessment, or allow more programs, services or activities to open.

4. Why has Nunavut decided to proceed with this style of framework?

This is the safest way forward and recognizes that other jurisdictions have set timelines and expectations that had to be altered or eliminated because the threat was too high or the situation changed.



Nunavut's Path: Frequently Asked Questions

5. Which restrictions will be lifted first?

The CPHO has categorized restrictions as either low, medium, or high risk both in terms of the risk of acquiring the virus and on the risk of transmitting the virus. When assessing which restrictions to lift, the starting point will be to relax those restrictions that will create the least risk to Nunavummiut first. They will be eased gradually according to the risk factors and in a way that allows stakeholders to prepare and to ensure Nunavummiut remain safe.

6. Which factors will determine if and when restrictions can be lifted?

- Status of transmission of COVID-19 in territory.
- Status of in-territory testing capacity.
- Current health system capacity.
- Transmission and cases levels in our most common travel destinations in Canada (Northwest Territories, Alberta, Manitoba, Québec and Ontario), and the possibility of spread to multiple locations within Nunavut.
- Current evidence available.
- Assessment of risk of each measure.
- Public health measures are and will continue to be guided by best practices, epidemiological considerations, and evidence.

7. How is the level of risk determined?

- There are several factors that determine risk:
- Duration of contact: the longer two people are close together, the more likely it is that a viral illness will be passed between the two.
- Nature of contact: the closer two people are to each other, the easier it is catch a virus.
- Location: Catching a virus is less likely when contact occurs outdoors.
- Vulnerability: Elders and individuals with compromised immune systems may be more susceptible to acquiring an illness and have higher risk of severe complications; children are less prone to severe complications and less likely to spread COVID-19.



Nunavut's Path: Frequently Asked Questions

8. When will Nunavut be able to lift its border restrictions?

With no vaccine and no treatment for COVID-19 the border restrictions continue to be our first line of defence from bringing COVID-19 into the territory. Easing the border controls will be one of our last considerations and having them in place will provide the confidence to loosen more restrictions in territory.

9. How can Nunavummiut do their part?

As restrictions are lifted and Nunavummiut get back to doing the activities that are important to them, it remains vital to continue taking the following precautions:

- Stay informed, be prepared and follow public health advice.
- Continue to practise good hygiene (hand hygiene, avoid touching face, respiratory etiquette, disinfect frequently touched surfaces).
- Maintain physical distancing as much as possible when outside of the home (i.e. from non-household members).
- Continue to increase environmental cleaning and ventilation of public spaces and worksites.
- Stay at home and away from others if symptomatic or feeling ill.
- Stay at home if you have pre-existing conditions.
- Wear a mask when social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Non-essential travel out of the territory is not recommended.
- All social gatherings and visits should be kept to a minimum.
- Assess and be aware of the risk with non-essential social gatherings.