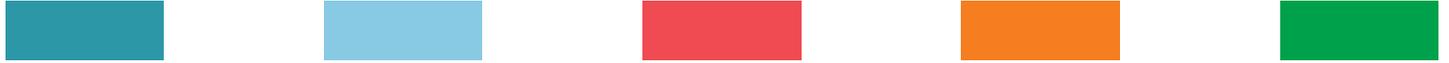First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Stay Protected – Even After Getting Vaccinated

A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, Acting Chief Medical Officer

On March 8, I was privileged to receive my Pfizer vaccine at Tsawout First Nation. Unfortunately, a little more than two weeks later, my husband and I both tested positive for COVID-19. We had been exceedingly careful – masks, hand sanitizers, no gatherings, no visiting – but we still got infected.

Here are some of the facts about why we can still get sick and why we need to keep up public health measures even after being vaccinated.

- Although the COVID-19 vaccines are not 100 per cent effective at preventing COVID-19 itself, they are very effective in preventing serious illness from COVID-19. Since the rollout of the first vaccine began, Health Canada data shows that there are 85 per cent fewer cases in First Nations across Canada due to high rates of vaccination in First Nations communities.

- Your body starts building immunity when you receive the COVID-19 vaccine and it takes about two to three weeks for your body to build good protection. This means that if you contracted COVID-19 before getting the vaccine, or contract it within the two-week period following the vaccine, you may still get sick from it.

- While vaccines protect you from getting ill, they do not always stop you from spreading the virus. Even after getting vaccinated, you can still be a carrier of COVID-19, so it's important to continue to practise public health measures, especially wearing masks and physically distancing.

To do your part to help protect BC First Nations communities, get vaccinated, practise physical distancing, wear your mask, sanitize frequently, follow all public health measures – and above all, be kind, calm, and continue to hold each other up! The more we do this, the sooner we'll be able to get back to more normal connections with our loved ones and communities. We can do it! We are in this together.