

GUIDANCE FOR COHORTS

Overview

This document has been developed to support individuals to better understand the concept of a cohort in the COVID-19 context; how cohorts help to limit the spread of the virus; the difference between core cohort and other types of cohorts; and how to keep cohorts safe.

A COVID-19 cohort, also referred to as a bubble, circle, or safe squad, is a small group whose members – always the *same* people - do not always keep 2 metres apart.

The cohort concept encourages individuals who cannot maintain 2 metre physical distance when in group settings to interact with the same people within their own cohort group rather than switching daily contacts or randomly interacting with others outside that circle.

Note: When interacting with individuals not in your cohort, individuals should maintain a distance of two metres or wear a mask when closer than two metres with others.

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-information.aspx>.

COVID-19 Information and Risk Mitigation

The purpose of forming a cohort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limiting close physical contact only to those in a cohort decreases opportunities for being exposed to the virus while giving the opportunity for social interaction between individuals within the cohort.• Keeping the same people in the same small cohort group, rather than mixing and mingling, helps reduce the chance you or someone else will get COVID-19.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ If someone does get sick, it is also easier to trace a person's close contacts when cohort members are known.
Core Cohort and recommended limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core Cohort: Your core cohort includes the people with whom you regularly spend the <i>longest amounts of time</i> and have the <i>closest physical contact</i> - those you can hug and touch - and those who are part of your daily or regular routines.• In the early months of COVID-19, Albertans were encouraged to limit close contact to their immediate families, household members or their closest tightknit social circle.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Core cohorts can now be expanded to include up to 15 additional people from outside of your household• Albertans should only belong to one core cohort and still need to keep it small and safe as possible.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You spend the longest amount of time and have the closest physical contact with these people. If one of you gets COVID-19, there is a greater chance of the virus spreading quickly to the other members.
<p>Other cohort types and recommended limits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under Stage 2 of relaunch, other types of cohort groups are available to Albertans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Child care programs may operate in cohorts of up to 30 people, including staff and children ○ Sports teams can play in region-only cohorts of up to 50 players and coaching staff (mini leagues) ○ Performers can have a cohort of up to 50 people (cast members or performers) ● Note: Sports and performing cohort numbers do not include parents or spectators ● Albertans might find themselves in more than one cohort at the same time. Limit the total number of other cohort groups to which you and your core cohort belong. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interacting with the <i>same</i> people and the <i>same</i> cohorts will be safer than constantly changing the people you interact with. ○ It is recommended if possible that households with sports, performing, and/or child care cohorts consider having a smaller core cohort, given the total number of close contacts between all groups.
<p>Safety recommendations for expanding your core cohort</p>	<p>Follow these simple steps to expand your core cohort safely.</p> <p>Step 1: Start with your current core group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This includes everyone you live with, including children, and anyone who regularly comes into your household. ● It also includes anyone who comes into regular close contact with the people you live with (e.g., your children’s other parent who lives outside the household, a babysitter or caregiver). <p>Step 2: Think carefully before expanding your core cohort</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Take a look at your everyday life and see who makes the most sense to include for you and your household. You may want to include another family with similarly-aged children or friends/family members that you want to spend more time with.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staying with those in your neighbourhood or those who live closest to you may slow the virus' geographic spread. • Don't feel pressured to expand a cohort until you feel confident it's safe. Start slow and safely add more members later. <p>Step 3: Get agreement and commitment from everyone to keep the core cohort safe. Members should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belong to only one core cohort • Limit interactions with people outside the core cohort • When interacting with people outside the core cohort, do it safely, in ways that keep risks low. Maintain a distance of 2 metres or wear a mask when closer than 2 metres with others. <p>Step 4: Limit the total number of other cohort groups to which you and your core cohort belong.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This might mean changing your daily routines or reducing the number of teams or groups you join. • When interacting with people in other types of cohorts, do it safely, in ways that keep risks low. • Minimize the amount of time you spend with them and limit the close physical contact you have with them.
<p>Safety recommendations for participating in other types of cohort groups</p>	<p>When participating in other types of cohort group, you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interact outdoors if possible – it's safer than indoors • avoid closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded places and close contact settings • keep the cohort in your local community or neighborhood to reduce geographic spread • be healthy and not show any COVID-19 symptoms (see the full symptom list) • have not travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days • have not been in close contact with a case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days • keep track of where you go, when you are there and who you meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ this will be helpful if someone is exposed to COVID-19. ○ download the ABTraceTogether app, a mobile contact tracing app that helps to let you know if you've been exposed to COVID-19 – or if you've exposed others – while protecting your privacy. <p>Those who are at high risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19 (for example, seniors or those who have underlying medical conditions such as high blood</p>

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	pressure, heart disease, lung disease, cancer or diabetes) may wish to form smaller cohorts, and/or only cohort with people who have no sports, recreation or child care cohorts to minimize exposure potential.
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