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Dear Community Members,

We are writing to you today to confirm that there has been a potential COVID-19 exposure in Saik'uz. This exposure took place at two households in Saik'uz after a visit from a band member living outside of the community. The households have been contacted about the potential exposure and are fully cooperating with Saik'uz Health. They are currently quarantining while they await COVID-19 testing.

We understand this may be alarming news. But we also understand that our community is resilient and resourceful. We take care of each other. And the best way to take care of each other right now is to be calm, be kind, and be safe.

Saik'uz Health and leadership are working to contain the potential exposure. We are in contact with the affected households to monitor their condition and to ensure they receive any help they may need. We are initiating contact tracing to determine if anyone else may have been exposed. The checkpoints now have stricter enforcement, including voluntary temperature checks and the turning away of any non-Saik'uz residents, and Saik'uz has partially activated its Emergency Response Plan. Saik'uz Health and leadership are in frequent contact with the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) and Northern Health to keep them updated on the situation and to ensure our community receives the best care possible.

However, the most important people needed to keep this community safe are not us, but you. You, the community members, can do the most to stop the spread of COVID-19 in Saik'uz.

**1. Only visit with people who live with you.**

If you do not live with someone, do not visit them in person. This includes friends, parents, siblings, cousins, grandparents, or any other family member. We know this is a hard thing to ask, especially during the holidays, but its one of the best things we can do to be COVID-19 safe.

**2. Practice social distancing.**

We all need groceries and some of us need medications or to attend important appointments like doctor visits or work. When you leave your home, practice social distancing, which means staying six feet away from other people and wearing a mask. If two adults hold out their arms and cannot touch, they are far enough apart.

**3. Wear a mask when outside your home.**

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets breathed out by an infected person. By wearing a mask, you reduce the distance those droplets can travel, so you are significantly less likely to infect someone else if you have COVID-19. If we all wear masks, we can all be protected!

\*masks are not required by those with a medical exemption or children under twelve.

**4. Wash your hands often.**

COVID-19 can be spread when someone touches an infected surface, then touches their nose, mouth, or eyes. By regularly washing your hands with soap and water (or sanitizing them when you cannot wash them), you protect yourself from this type of transmission.

**5. Stay calm. Be kind.**

This is a challenging time for everyone. Some of us are scared, some of us are angry, and some of us feel isolated or uncertain. These are normal things to feel in this situation. The best way to counteract anger is to be kind. The best way to counteract fear is to be calm. We will get through this. Together, we can keep each other safe and healthy.

If you are concerned you may have been exposed to COVID-19 in Saik'uz, contact Tracy Appel, General Manager, or Regina Thomas, Health Manager, at the Saik'uz Health Centre (250-567-9773). The voicemail will be checked at 3:00 PM every day and emergencies only will be responded to. Always reach out to Regina or Tracy as they are the most informed people and can give you accurate information about the community and what is being done within it. Help stop the spread of misinformation as this creates unnecessary anxiety, stress, and fear in our community.

If you have general questions about COVID-19, you can phone the COVID-19 hotline at \*811. If you are concerned you may have COVID-19, you can take the self-assessment at [bc.thrive.health/covid19](https://bc.thrive.health/covid19) or call \*811.

No matter what happens, we will get through this. Together, we can keep each other safe, keep each other healthy, and share kindness. We believe in the strength of our community.

Sincerely,

Saik'uz Chief & Council and Saik'uz Health