



CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING: JANUARY 7, 2022

THE CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING FOR THE TOWN OF WELLESLEY

Living with COVID-19



Wellesley entered a new year with COVID infections continuing to skyrocket, largely due to the extremely contagious nature of the Omicron variant. Updated case information from the past 14 days shows:

- **395 new reported cases.** Wellesley is averaging 40 cases/day however there are likely more cases that are not reported.
- **9.63% test positivity rate.** This number is likely much higher due to the use of rapid at-home testing.

While these numbers are high, the impact of COVID is vastly different now than in the past two years. Health officials want to reassure the community of some important points.

- **There are no known deaths or hospitalizations in our community from the recent COVID surge.** Most individuals experience mild symptoms that can be managed at home.
- **As a society and as a community we better understand COVID-19 and have better tools to reduce the impact of the virus.** Wellesley has high vaccination rates and well-informed citizens. The medical community continues to develop therapies like boosters, pills, and emerging medical treatments to largely prevent severe infections.

Resources for Residents

Isolation & Quarantine: If you test positive for COVID or are a close contact, follow [isolation or quarantine guidelines](#).

- Close contacts are advised to test 3-5 days after exposure for the most accurate results.
- Older individuals or those who are immune compromised should contact health care providers for guidance after a possible exposure.

Testing: Both Antigen and PCR tests can confirm viral load. While a PRC test is the most accurate, rapid antigen tests administered 3-5 days after exposure are also effective. Currently test kits and testing appointments are limited; continue to check with pharmacies, grocery stores, and online retailers.

Please check expiration dates! Some at-home test kits expire quickly. Please check expiration dates on test kits; expired kits do not provide accurate test results.

Vaccines & Boosters: These work! If you're vaccinated and boosted and get COVID-19, most people will likely experience mild to moderate symptoms that can be managed at home. This week, the [FDA approved and recommended boosters for children 12 and up](#). Visit the Massachusetts [vaxfinder.com](#) site for locations and availability or book appointments at local pharmacies such as CVS, Walgreens, or Stop & Shop. Check websites frequently!

Mask Up Wellesley! The Health Department has issued a **mask advisory** for all individuals over the age of 5 when indoors in a public setting, regardless of vaccination status. An [emergency order](#) requiring masks when indoors in Wellesley municipal buildings remains in effect.

- **Check your masks.** To be effective, masks MUST cover your mouth and nose. Health experts are now recommending surgical or other medical grade masks (N95, KN95) which block aerosol particles more effectively than cloth face coverings.
- **Mask advisory signage** for businesses, houses of worship, and other public areas is available on the [Health Department webpages](#).

Why Cloth Masks Might Not Be Enough as Omicron Spreads

Time it takes to transmit an infectious dose of Covid-19

		PERSON NOT INFECTED IS WEARING			
		Nothing	Cloth mask	Surgical mask	N95
PERSON INFECTED IS WEARING	Nothing	15 min.	20 min.	30 min.	2.5 hours
	Cloth mask	20 min.	27 min.	40 min.	3.3 hours
	Surgical mask	30 min.	40 min.	1 hour	5 hours
	N95	2.5 hours	3.3 hours	5 hours	25 hours

It will take 25 hours for an infectious dose of Covid-19 to transmit between people wearing non-fit-tested N95 respirators. If they're using tightly sealed N95s—where only 1% of particles enter the facepiece—they will have 2,500 hours of protection.

Note: Results published in Spring 2021. The CDC expects the Omicron variant to spread more easily.
Source: ACGIH's Pandemic Response Task Force

Changes to Contact Tracing

With the rapid increase in positive COVID cases and exposures, the Health Department is no longer able to reach out to close contacts individually. Nurses are prioritizing cases. If you test positive for COVID, please see the [Health Department information sheet](#) for the latest guidance and recommendations.

A reminder that COVID-19 data is updated weekly every Friday on Wellesley's COVID-19 Information Hub at www.wellesley.ma.gov/coronavirus

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