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FALL 2022 UPDATE

In preparation for fall, back to school, and the return to more indoor activities, the Wellesley Health Department is sharing updated information about Influenza, COVID-19, mosquito-borne illnesses and Monkeypox.

Influenza

We strongly urge all residents to get an annual flu shot, which can significantly reduce your risk of serious illness.

Flu clinics will be offered this fall by the Health Department for ages 6+ with dates TBD ([check HERE for updated information and dates](#)). Shots administered through the Health Department are done by a Registered Nurse, who will be available to answer any questions or concerns you may have during that time. If you are unable to obtain a flu shot through the Health Department, shots are also available at many local pharmacies and doctor's offices.

COVID-19

COVID-19 remains active, and residents should still take precautions. Below are the latest recommendations from the [CDC](#) and [Massachusetts Department of Public Health \(MDPH\)](#), along with updated [Isolation and Quarantine guidelines](#) from the Health Department.

Vaccination

Getting vaccinated is the best measure you can take to protect yourself from severe illness due to COVID-19. Anyone ages 6 months+ is eligible for a vaccine, and anyone ages 5 years and up is eligible for a booster (ages 50+ or those who are immunocompromised are eligible for a 2nd booster). You do not need to wait for newer vaccines to get your booster. The current vaccines are safe and effective. As people return to everyday routines, activities move indoors, and students go back to school, getting fully vaccinated as soon as possible offers the best protection against severe illness. Please talk with your health care provider if you have questions about getting vaccinated.

COVID vaccinations are available at many local pharmacies and doctor's offices. Vaccines will also be available at all Health Department flu clinics scheduled in the coming months. Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has many opportunities for FREE vaccinations for anyone eligible for a vaccine. [Visit the MDPH website for locations and dates.](#)

Masking

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health continues to advise that individuals should wear a mask or face covering when indoors if they or someone in their household has a weakened immune system, or if they are at increased risk for severe disease because of their age or an underlying medical condition. Updated quarantine guidance now recommends that anyone who is exposed to COVID-19 should wear a mask at all times for 10 days. [Visit the MDPH website for more information on masking.](#)

Testing

The Health Department encourages residents to continue to test for COVID-19 as needed. For full information on testing, visit the MDPH website. As a reminder, every home in the U.S. is eligible to order up to three rounds of free at-home tests. Order yours today at this link: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>

For more detailed information about the best way to use rapid at-home tests, including how to improve their accuracy by using repeated testing, see [this link to FDA guidance](#). [Visit the MDPH website for more information on testing.](#)

When to Test

- If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild, isolate and take a test and stay home until you know the result. If the results are negative, retest 24-48 hours later.

What kind of test can I use?

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19: Rapid antigen or PCR (If you had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, you should use a rapid antigen test rather than a PCR, since PCR tests can stay positive for months).
- If you do not have symptoms but were exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19: Rapid antigen or, if you have not had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, PCR
- To test in order to stop masking prior to day 10 following isolation: Rapid antigen

Mosquito-Borne Illness Prevention

Early fall is prime time for mosquito-borne illnesses like West Nile Virus and Triple E (Eastern Equine Encephalitis). The Town of Wellesley does not spray for mosquitoes. Protect yourself and your family from mosquito bites by taking prevention measures. The Health Department has put together an [FAQ](#) with specific actions you can take and resources with more information.

Monkeypox

Monkeypox is a rare disease. Symptoms include a rash which may look like pimples or blisters (pox), often with a flu-like illness. While Monkeypox can spread to anyone through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact, most people are not at-risk for Monkeypox. Visit these websites for more information on Monkeypox prevention, signs and symptoms, vaccines, and treatment. More info at:

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#)