



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Wellesley Health Department

TOWN OF WELLESLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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*Happy Holidays and a Joyous
New Year*

FROM THE WELLESLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

WINTER 2022-2023 UPDATE

Respiratory Viruses

FLU

We strongly urge residents to get an annual flu shot, which can significantly reduce your risk of serious illness. The Health Department has a limited amount of Flu vaccine available by appointment at our office. Call or email to schedule your shot for ages 6 and up. Flu mist and high dose vaccine available. 781-489-4356, health@welleslyma.gov.

RSV

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Public Health officials, including the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics, are urging parents and families to take [steps to prevent illness and stay healthy](#).

Most people recover from RSV in a week or two, but the virus can be serious, especially for infants and older adults.

There are steps you can take to help prevent the spread of RSV and other cold-like illnesses.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your upper shirt sleeve, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid close contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, and sharing cups and eating utensils, with others.

COVID-19

COVID-19 remains active, and residents should still take precautions when necessary. Below are the latest recommendations from the [CDC](#) and [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#).

Vaccination:

Getting vaccinated is the best measure you can take to protect yourself from severe illness due to COVID. Guidelines for pediatric boosters have recently changed. [Visit this LINK for updated information.](#) Getting fully vaccinated as soon as possible offers the best protection against severe illness. Please consult with your health care provider for questions about getting vaccinated.

COVID vaccinations are available at many local pharmacies and doctor's offices. 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 advises 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. [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 again eligible to order free at-home tests. Order yours today at this link: <https://www.covid.gov/tests>.

The Health Department will also have free tests available until supplies run out. [Click HERE for address and hours.](#) 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.](#)

What Should You do if You Test Positive for COVID 19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from no symptoms to severe illness. [Symptoms](#) may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

If you are experiencing symptoms, consider the following options:

1. [Get tested for COVID-19](#) (click link for testing guidelines with and without symptoms)
2. **If you have already tested positive for COVID-19, see below for isolation guidance.** You can also visit [this website](#) for more information.
3. Take care of yourself!

When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

Look for emergency warning signs* for COVID 19:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

If someone is showing any of these signs, call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19

****Other symptoms may occur.***

COLD WEATHER SAFETY

During extremely cold weather, staying warm and safe can be a challenge. The following links provide information on preparing for winter storms, preventing cold temperature-related health problems, and protecting yourself during all stages of a winter storm.

[Preparing for a winter storm](#)

[Stay Safe During & After a Winter Storm](#)

[Prevent Hypothermia & Frostbite](#)

[Safe Driving](#)

HOLIDAY SAFETY

Make sure you have a safe and enjoyable holiday season by following safety tips from the National Safety Council

Decorate Safely

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency rooms see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season. When decorating follow [these tips](#) from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Watch Out for Fire-Starters

- Candles and Fireplaces: Use of candles and fireplaces, combined with an increase in the amount of combustible, seasonal decorations in many homes during the holidays, means more risk for fire.
- Decorations: Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant. Visit [this website](#) for more info.

Food Poisoning Is No Joke

Keep your holidays happy by handling food safely. The [foodsafety.gov](#) website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the WHD provide some [valuable holiday food safety tips](#).

It's Better to Give Safely

Gifts and toys should inspire joy, not cause injuries. Thousands of children are seriously injured in toy-related incidents every year. Avoid safety hazards while gifting with these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

- Be cautious about toys that have button batteries or magnets, which can be harmful or fatal if swallowed
- Toys are age-rated for safety, not for children's intellect and physical ability, so be sure to choose toys in the correct age range
- Choose toys for children under 3 that do not have small parts which could be choking hazards

To find out about holiday toy safety and recalls, check the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website](#).