



TOWN OF WELLESLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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WINTER 2023-2024 UPDATE

Respiratory Viruses

FLU

We strongly urge residents to get an annual flu shot, which can significantly reduce your risk of serious illness. Please note: People with egg allergy may receive any vaccine appropriate for their age and health status. Check with your physician and visit the [CDC website](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/egg-allergies.htm) (www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/egg-allergies.htm) for more information.

[Click here for more information about Flu](#) (www.wellesleyma.gov/1883/Flu-Clinics-and-Resources), including information on treatment and care.

RSV

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover from RSV in a week or two, but the virus can be serious, especially for infants and older adults. RSV is acquired by close contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, and sharing cups and eating utensils.

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.
- If you are sick, avoid close contact with others.

RSV shot recommendations:

- Adults ages 60+ are advised to speak to a clinician about whether the new RSV vaccine is right for them.
- All pregnant women between weeks 32 and 36 of pregnancy should receive the new RSV vaccine to protect their newborn.
- A new RSV shot for babies younger than 8 months has been approved, but due to supply shortages this year is only available for high-risk babies whose mothers did not receive the vaccine while pregnant. Consult your medical provider for more information.

For more information about RSV, visit the [CDC website \(www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html).

COVID 19

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

Getting vaccinated is one measure you can take to protect yourself from severe illness due to COVID-19. Updated versions of the vaccine are now released every Fall. If you recently had COVID-19 and have not had your annual vaccine, CDC recommends waiting 3 months after infection to get vaccinated.

COVID-19 vaccinations are available at many local pharmacies and doctor's offices. Additionally, [the Massachusetts Department of Public Health \(MDPH\) has information on where to access vaccines](#).

If you qualify, antiviral medications like Paxlovid are extremely effective in reducing progression to severe disease due to COVID. Please consult with your health care provider for questions about antivirals or getting vaccinated.

[Visit our website for updated COVID 19 information, including updated isolation and quarantine recommendations](#). (www.wellesleyma.gov/1466/Coronavirus-Information)

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](#)

[Car Safety](#)

[Visit our website](#) to learn more cold weather safety tips (www.wellesleyma.gov/1989/Holiday-Season-and-Cold-Weather-Safety).

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

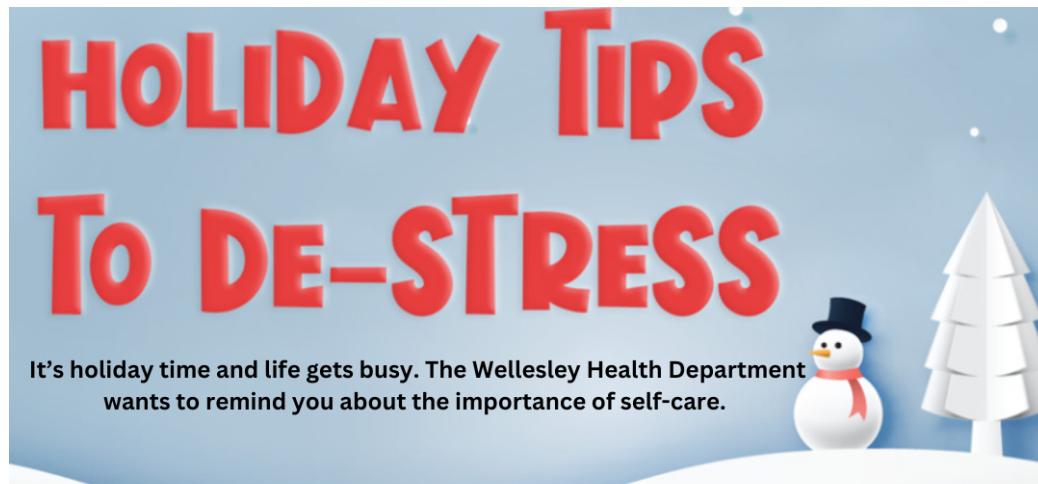
Keep your holidays happy by handling food safely. The [foodsafety.gov](#) website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the WHD provide some [valuable holiday food safety tips](#).

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](#).



Remember to take care of your physical needs- it's easy to get depleted. Get plenty of rest and hydrate! Eat a healthy, balanced diet to the best of your ability, try not to overindulge, and dedicate time to exercise. Try not to overbook yourself- say no if you are feeling overextended.

Do the things that provide joy for you- take a walk, read a book, listen to your favorite music, and surround yourself with caring people.

If you would like a supportive listening ear, call the Wellesley Health Department Senior Community Social Worker for more tips on managing stress, as well as how to find professional help when needed. Call in office hours Fridays 10:00AM-12:00PM, or call anytime during business hours.

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