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**Westport Board of Health
COVID-19 & Other Updates
December 2023**

It has been over a year since our last regular COVID-19 update. The pandemic has moved beyond the emergency stage and we have adjusted to a new normal. But COVID-19 (and flu) cases are starting to show up again. We want to share the latest advice and reminders so you can stay healthy for the holidays.

Confirmed Case Status:

Westport has seen a small uptick in COVID-19 cases as we enter the winter season, however we have no reports or hospitalizations or deaths in town so far. Statewide there have been 390 confirmed and 79 probable deaths due to COVID this season (July 2nd to Dec. 2nd). [State COVID data dashboard](#). Note that individuals testing themselves using at-home antigen tests are NOT included in the case data.

Keeping up to date on COVID vaccination status and use of a mask in high-risk settings will still help reduce the risk of death, severe illness or long COVID.

The Department of Public Health recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get a seasonal flu vaccine and an updated COVID-19 vaccine, both of which can take up to two weeks to take full effect to protect against infection, serious illness, and hospitalization, and reduce the chances of suffering the effects of Long COVID. The updated COVID-19 vaccine is effective against current variants and widely available for little or no cost to Massachusetts residents.

- **IN HOME VACCINATION:** Residents who cannot get to a vaccination location can schedule an appointment for in-home COVID and flu vaccination by going to <http://www.mass.gov/VaccinesAtHome> or calling 833-983-0485.
- **REMINDER –** If you have COVID-like symptoms you should get tested and stay home pending the results. If you test positive (by either PCR or rapid antigen test), notify your close contacts and stay in isolation for five days, or until your symptoms clear up. [Exposure & Isolation Guidance](#)

Mass. Vaccination Status:

The state has an updated dashboard that tracks rates of current COVID-19 and flu vaccinations at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting>. As of the end of November 15.3% of Mass residents have received this season's COVID-19 vaccine and 32.3% are vaccinated against flu. Westport has slightly lower rates (12.5% COVID and 29% flu), according to preliminary state data. You can get both flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time if you wish. The RSV vaccine is also available for eligible populations.

UPDATES & OTHER HEALTH NEWS

Updated COVID information links are provided below for reference. You are always free to call the Town Nurse (508-636-1030) or the Health Dept. office with any questions.

UPDATED COVID-19 VACCINE

The virus that causes COVID-19 is always changing, and protection from COVID-19 vaccines declines over time. Receiving the 2023-2024 vaccine can restore protection. Most health insurance plans will cover the updated COVID-19 vaccine at no cost to you.

- Visit the [state vaccine information page](#) for more information and where to find the vaccine.
- **No insurance? You can get a free COVID-19 vaccine** at a pharmacy participating in the CDC's Bridge Access Program, which includes all CVS and Walgreens stores.

FREE Telehealth Service for COVID-19 treatment with Paxlovid

The state is offering this service to help residents see if Paxlovid, a COVID-19 treatment pill taken by mouth, is a good option. To find out more or begin an online video consult:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/free-telehealth-for-covid-19-treatment-with-paxlovid>

FREE COVID TEST KITS STILL AVAILABLE

The Town Nurse (or BOH office, if the nurse is not available) is distributing free COVID test kits to residents.

2023-2024 FLU VACCINE FROM TOWN NURSE

Flu Vaccine Available by Appointment. **Please call the Nurse's Office at 508-636-1030 to schedule.**

RSV VACCINE

In addition to flu and COVID-19 vaccination, many people are eligible for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccination this year, including pregnant people, newborns, and many people 60 and older. To date, 499 Westport residents have received the RSV vaccine. COVID-19, flu, and RSV are the three viruses that are most likely to cause severe disease resulting in hospitalization and sometimes death.

VACCINE RECORDS

The CDC is no longer issuing COVID vaccination cards. You can visit www.myvaxrecords.mass.gov to view and save your vaccine record.

BLOOD DRIVE: The Board of Health is sponsoring monthly Red Cross blood drives at St. John the Baptist church. The next date is January 18, 2024. Visit <http://www.redcross.org> for details and to make an appointment.

OTHER TOWN NURSE SERVICES: Blood pressure checks, Mom Talks (monthly support group for new Moms), Free Naloxone, Syringe disposal and more.

- Sign up for e-alerts here: <https://www.westport-ma.com/subscribe>

Thank you for your continued cooperation and stay safe everyone! Enjoy the holiday season.

Matthew J. Armendo, Director