# Bureau of Substance Addiction Services Massachusetts Dept of Public Health

Respiratory Virus Information Update, Winter 2024

All links in [blue](http://mass.gov/) are clickable resources

Reminder: Submit Required Notifications when appropriate (cases of COVID are required).

[Forms can be found here](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/information-for-licensed-substance-use-disorder-treatment-programs#reporting-forms-)

# Best Practices for Preparing for Flu, RSV, and COVID

 [Healthcare Provider Toolkit: Preparing Your Patients for the Fall and Winter Virus Season](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/tools-resources/health-care-providers.html)-- Guide for working with your clients to ensure that they are ready for virus season

 [Project Firstline: Infection Control Actions for Respiratory Viruses](https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/healthcare/respiratory-virus-prevention.html)--Prepare your site for virus season with these helpful practices

 [Viral Respiratory Pathogens Toolkit for Nursing Homes](https://www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/pdfs/Viral-Respiratory-Pathogens-Toolkit-H.pdf)- Helpful guide for preparing for and responding to clients or staff who develop signs or symptoms of a respiratory viral infection. The majority of this rich resource is applicable to congregate care settings.

 [MA Respiratory Disease Reporting Dashboard](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/respiratory-illness-reporting)-- Keep up to date with current rates of COVID-

19, RSV, and Flu in Massachusetts

# Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV) Information

 [CDC Information about RSV](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html)  [RSV Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/prevention.html)

 [RSV Vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/vis-statements/rsv.html)--available for adults 60 years old and older, pregnant people, and babies

 [RSV Transmission](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/transmission.html)  [RSV Symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/about/symptoms.html)

 [RSV for High Risk Individuals](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/high-risk/older-adults.html) --Those at higher risk include adults with certain other underlying medical conditions, adults living in nursing homes, congregate, or long-term care facilities, adults with weakened immune systems, older adults, and adults with chronic heart or lung disease.

# Influenza (Flu) Information

 [CDC Information about Influenza](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm)  [Flu Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html)

 [Flu vaccine](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/influenza-vaccination)--The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) recommends annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months and older

 Keeping in mind that [3/4 of all adults](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/for-practice/increasing-vacc-rates.html#%3A~%3Atext%3DDespite%20the%20tremendous%20benefit%20of%2Cor%20more%20routinely%20recommended%20vaccines) are missing one or more routinely recommended vaccines, it is recommended that sites offer Flu clinics to staff and patients if possible. These can be scheduled with participating local pharmacies.

 [Flu Symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/index.html)  [Flu Treatment](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/index.html)

 [Flu for High Risk Individuals](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm)-- Those at higher risk include include adults with certain other chronic medical conditions, adults living in nursing homes, congregate, or long-term care facilities, adults with weakened immune systems, older adults, and adults with chronic heart or lung disease. Flu vaccination is especially important for high risk individuals.

# COVID-19 Information

COVID-19 Vaccine

 [General COVID-19 vaccine information](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-information)

 Free or low-cost vaccines

If your client has health insurance

If your client doesn’t have health insurance, or have a health plan that does not cover the cost

Most plans will cover the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost. Please check with your client’s health insurance provider.

You can get a free COVID-19 vaccine from:

Your [local health department](https://www.mass.gov/lists/massachusetts-city-and-town-websites) or [community health center](https://www.massleague.org/findahealthcenter/index.php)

A state-sponsored [mobile vaccine clinic](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-mobile-vaccination-program)

A pharmacy participating in the CDC’s [Bridge Access](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/bridge/index.html) [Program](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/bridge/index.html), which includes all CVS and Walgreens stores

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Masking and PPE

 [Mask recommendations](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mask-recommendations)--Wearing a mask provides protection against COVID and other viruses, especially when indoors or in crowded spaces.

 A COVID negative individual should consider wearing a mask especially:  If the individual has a weakened immune system

 If the individual is at increased risk for severe disease because of their age or an underlying medical condition

 If the individual is in contact with an individual with a weakened immune system or is at increased risk for severe disease

 [PPE Guidance and Resources](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/ppe-testing-and-vaccine-supply-resources-during-covid-19)

 [Resources](http://bit.ly/covidtestrequestMA)--EOHHS offers over the counter (OTC) rapid antigen tests to contracted congregate care settings that needs tests for outbreak or symptomatic/exposure testing.

 Tests may be requested at the following link: [bit.ly/covidtestrequestMA](https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/b73ba31f6e5f4d76986cc9f591cb3043)

 Eligible entities may use statewide contracts to [purchase rapid antigen test kits and](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-statewide-contract-resources) [personal protective equipment (PPE)](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-statewide-contract-resources)

 [Using a COVID-19 Self-Test](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/using-a-covid-19-self-test)--More information about at-home COVID-19 tests, including links to instructions in multiple languages

Guidance for Congregate Care Programs

 [Congregate care providers must continue to comply with federal and state COVID-19](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing) [guidance.](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing)

 [General Testing Information](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/about-covid-19-testing)--When to test, symptoms of COVID, etc.

 [EOHHS Congregate Care Surveillance Testing Guidance](https://www.mass.gov/media/2490716/download) --Section III: Testing Protocol

 [Congregate Care Infection Control Resources](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/congregate-care-infection-control-resources)--Infection control resources for Congregate Care Settings developed in partnership with Commonwealth Medicine and EOHHS and DPH.

 [CDC Additional Information for Community Congregate Living Settings](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/community-congregate-living-settings.html)--Helpful considerations for congregate care programs to prevent the spread of COVID-19

Exposure, Isolation and Quarantine

 [COVID-19 Isolation and Exposure Guidance](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-isolation-and-exposure-guidance-for-the-general-public)--Information about isolation and quarantine

Questions? Email your Regional Manager, Licensing Inspector,

or Healthcare Integration Coordinator, Therese Claxton at [therese.m.claxton@mass.gov](mailto:therese.m.claxton@mass.gov)