



# HW HEALTH OFFICE UPDATES



December 2020

We wish you all a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season. Please see the [CDC's winter holiday health and safety tips](#).

## COVID-19 CLOSE CONTACT

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of an infectious person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. A COVID positive individual is considered infectious or contagious starting 2 days prior to their symptom onset, or 2 days prior to their positive COVID test in the case of asymptomatic individuals. During the contact tracing process, positive individuals are interviewed to see who they have been in close contact with during their infectious period, and close contacts are then notified of the need to quarantine. Masks reduce risk but do not eliminate exposure completely.

## COVID-19 QUARANTINE

The CDC and MA DPH have provided new quarantine guidelines based on data on the typical timing of developing COVID after close contact exposure. For individuals who do not have, and have never had, symptoms during their quarantine period there is now a 7 day option with testing or a 10 day option without testing. Local public health nurses work with individuals to release them from quarantine, or from isolation in the case of positive individuals. Here are the quarantine options from the MA DPH:

OPTIONS	CRITERIA	ACTIVE MONITORING	RESIDUAL RISK
7 days of strict quarantine	<u>Release on Day 8 IF:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A test (either PCR or antigen) taken on Day 5 or later is negative; AND</li> <li>The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND</li> <li>The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14</li> </ul>	Individual must actively monitor symptoms and take temperature once daily. IF even mild symptoms develop or the individual has a temperature of 100.0 F, they must immediately self-isolate, contact the public health authority overseeing their quarantine and get tested.	Approximately 5% residual risk of disease development
10 days of strict quarantine	<u>Release on Day 11 IF:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual has not experienced any symptoms up to that point; AND</li> <li>The individual conducts active monitoring through Day 14.</li> <li>No test is necessary under this option</li> </ul>	No additional active monitoring required	Approximately 1% residual risk of disease development
14 days of strict quarantine	<u>Release on Day 15 IF:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The individual has experienced ANY symptoms during the quarantine period EVEN if they have a negative COVID-19 test; OR</li> <li>The individual indicates they are unwilling or unable to conduct active monitoring.</li> </ul>	No additional active monitoring required	Maximal risk reduction



## TRAVEL

All Massachusetts residents are required to comply with the [COVID-19 travel order](#). If you are traveling to a non-lower risk state, you need to follow the travel order which requires that you quarantine for 14 days upon return to MA or seek COVID-19 PCR testing no earlier than 72 hrs prior to your return to MA. A negative COVID-19 PCR test needs to be submitted to your school nurse prior to your child(ren)'s return to in-person learning. If your children are 10 years old or younger, they are not required to receive a COVID-19 test, but you will need to share documentation of your adult household member's negative tests to your school nurse prior to their return to in-person learning. Please notify your school nurse of any travel plans during our December vacation.



## COVID-19 TESTING

If your child is experiencing potential [COVID-19 symptoms](#) please keep your child home from school and/or contact their health care provider and seek testing if advised. Testing also needs to be done to comply with the travel order. We ask you to seek a COVID-19 PCR test which is considered the gold standard for testing. MA has many free [stop the spread testing locations](#), including locations in Salem which do not require an appointment and are open 6 days a week. **The towns of Hamilton and Wenham are also offering COVID-19 testing to their residents, HW school employees and their families, and all HW students on certain dates in December at the Miles River Middle School parking lot. See the [website](#) for eligibility requirements and testing dates.**



## INFLUENZA

All MA students are now [required](#) to be vaccinated against influenza by December 31st, 2020. This is critical during the pandemic as it will reduce the impact of COVID 19. Vaccination for influenza will also aid in the protection of vulnerable populations and decrease the burden on the healthcare system. Both the flumist and the flu shot are available this year. You will be/have been notified if we are missing documentation of your child(ren)'s flu vaccine. If you have not already done so, please provide documentation of your child(ren)'s flu vaccine to your school nurse as soon as possible.



For more health and COVID-19 information please visit our [HW nurses' website](#).