

Dear Shutesbury Residents:

It's surely not news to you that COVID-19 is surging in our area, especially in Amherst, prompting us to resume our weekly reports. In Shutesbury as of Friday the 17th we had five cases in isolation and one contact in quarantine.

With so many cases, there is high demand for rapid tests, but access to these tests has become very difficult in Amherst. PCR tests are more available, but it is currently taking about 4 days to get results. If you are having trouble accessing a test site in Amherst, consider Greenfield, Orange, or Ware, which may be less stressed. To find a test go to <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test>

Over-the-counter rapid tests can be purchased at commercial pharmacies, and are performed by the consumer without oversight by trained personnel and without documentation of the results. Any person getting a positive on such a test is urged to stay home, contact their health care provider and arrange for a confirmatory PCR, notify their recent close contacts, and (if the test pertains to a child in school) please notify their school nurse. *Important: an unobserved home test does not meet the requirements for early exit from quarantine, for airplane travel, or for most other activities that require documentation of a negative test.*

Mosquito-borne disease: there have been seven human cases of West Nile Virus in Massachusetts this summer, and no cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Please continue to be cautious about mosquitoes. And remember that ticks remain active all year long! There is information about this at shutesbury.org/health

The Shutesbury Board of Health