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ADVISORY REGARDING FACE COVERINGS

This Advisory has been updated as of March 1

The Department of Public Health urges all eligible residents to get vaccinated and stay up to date on COVID vaccinations including when eligible for booster doses. Vaccination remains the most effective protection against serious illness, hospitalization, and death.

Recognizing that Massachusetts is a national leader in vaccine acceptance, and in light of recent positive progress on COVID-19 indicators, the Department of Public Health now advises that a fully vaccinated person should wear a mask or face covering when indoors (and not in your own home) if you have a weakened immune system, or if you are at increased risk for severe disease because of your age or an underlying medical condition, or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease or is unvaccinated.

As a reminder, there are multiple conditions that may put someone at higher risk for severe disease; information on those conditions can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>. Your primary care physician can advise you whether you are at increased risk.

For individuals who are not fully vaccinated, it is important that you continue to wear a face covering or mask to help prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people.

Individuals who are considered close contacts or who have tested positive must follow the [isolation and quarantine guidance](#) which includes wearing a mask in public for 5 more days after they leave isolation or quarantine on day 5, regardless of vaccination status.

All people in Massachusetts (regardless of vaccination status) are **required to continue wearing face coverings in certain settings**, including some transportation and health care facilities. As of February 25th, the CDC is no longer requiring that masks be worn on school buses or vans for K-12 students and children in childcare programs. The Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and Early Education and Care (EEC) have since updated their guidance. Please see www.mass.gov/maskrules for a complete list of venues where face coverings have remained mandatory since May 29, 2021.

When you wear a face covering or cloth mask, it should:

- Be the highest quality mask that is comfortable and that you will wear consistently,
- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face,
- Be secured with ties or ear loops,
- Include multiple layers of fabric,
- Allow for breathing without restriction, and
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.

For more information, please refer to the CDC at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html> This advisory may change based on public health data and further guidance from the CDC.