

COMMUNITY UPDATE COVID-19

February 15, 2021:

The Town of Mansfield continues its community update on our website with our up to date information and important tips for the public as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more complete information, please see the town [coronavirus webpage](#).

Due to the Presidents' Day Holiday, local updated case numbers will be available tomorrow.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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State public health officials announce new COVID-19 variant cases, urge continued protective measures

BOSTON — The Massachusetts Department of Public Health today announced 19 additional cases of the B.1.1.7 COVID-19 variant. Testing completed at the State Public Health Laboratory has identified 19 infections of the B.1.1.7 variant, originally identified in the United Kingdom (UK), bringing the total number of cases known to be infected with this variant of the virus to 29 in the Commonwealth. The first case in the United States was identified in late December 2020 and in Massachusetts on January 17, 2021.

Four of those 29 cases have evidence of recent travel, suggesting that the majority of cases identified in Massachusetts are community-acquired.

Cases have ranged in age from 4 years to-almost 70; they include 13 females and 16 males. There have been 17 cases in Worcester County, one in Hampden County, 2 in Middlesex County, 6 in Norfolk County, 2 in Plymouth County, and 1 in Suffolk County.

The B.1.1.7 variant is known to spread more easily and has caused a rapid surge of cases in the UK, several other countries, and in parts of California and Florida. Two other variants of concern are the B.1.351 originally found in South Africa, and the P.1 variant, which originated in Brazil. Currently, there are no confirmed cases of those two variants in Massachusetts.

The best defense against a rapid rise in cases from variants of concern is to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

New information from CDC shows that improving the fit and filtration of masks helps reduce the spread of the virus. Mask fit can be improved by using a mask with a nose wire and by using a mask fitter or by knotting the ear loops and tucking the sides. Mask filtration is improved by using multiple layers. Learn more about how to use masks to protect yourself and others at [Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19 | CDC](#).

Other critical public health measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 include social distancing (staying 6 feet away from others), avoiding groups, staying home when you are sick, getting tested if you have symptoms or are identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and getting vaccinated when it is your turn.

Learn more about variants of concern at [New Variants of the Virus that Causes COVID-19 | CDC](#) and track their presence in both Massachusetts and the US at [US COVID-19 Cases Caused by Variants | CDC](#).

- **Improve How Your Mask Protects You**

Correct and consistent [mask use](#) is a critical step everyone can take to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. Masks work best when everyone wears them, but not all masks provide the same protection. When choosing a mask, look at how well it fits, how well it filters the air, and how many layers it has.

Two important ways to make sure your mask works the best it can

- **Make sure your mask fits snugly against your face.** Gaps can let air with respiratory droplets leak in and out around the edges of the mask
- **Pick a mask with layers to keep your respiratory droplets in and others' out.** A mask with layers will stop more respiratory droplets getting inside your mask or escaping from your mask if you are sick.



For more information on science behind improving how your mask protects you, see [Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19](#).

For more information on wearing a mask and personal protective equipment in healthcare workplaces, see [Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Healthcare Personnel During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#).

Do

Choose a mask with a **Nose Wire**

- A nose wire is a metal strip along the top of the mask
- Nose wires prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask.
- Bend the nose wire over your nose to fit close to your face.

Use a **Mask Fitter or Brace**

- Use a mask fitter or brace over a disposable mask or a cloth mask to prevent air from leaking around the edges of the mask.

Check that it **Fits Snugly** over your nose, mouth, and chin

- Check for gaps by cupping your hands around the outside edges of the mask.
- Make sure no air is flowing from the area near your eyes or from the sides of the mask.
- If the mask has a good fit, you will feel warm air come through the front of the mask and may be able to see the mask material move in and out with each breath.

Add **Layers** of material

2 ways to layer:

- Use a cloth mask that has multiple layers of fabric.
- Wear one disposable mask underneath a cloth mask.
 - The second mask should push the edges of the inner mask against your face.

Make sure you can see and breathe easily

Knot and Tuck ear loops of a 3-ply mask

- Knot the ear loops of a 3-ply face mask where they join the edge of the mask
- Fold and tuck the unneeded material under the edges
- For video instructions, see: <https://youtu.be/UANi8Cc71A0>external icon.



Do NOT

Combine two disposable masks

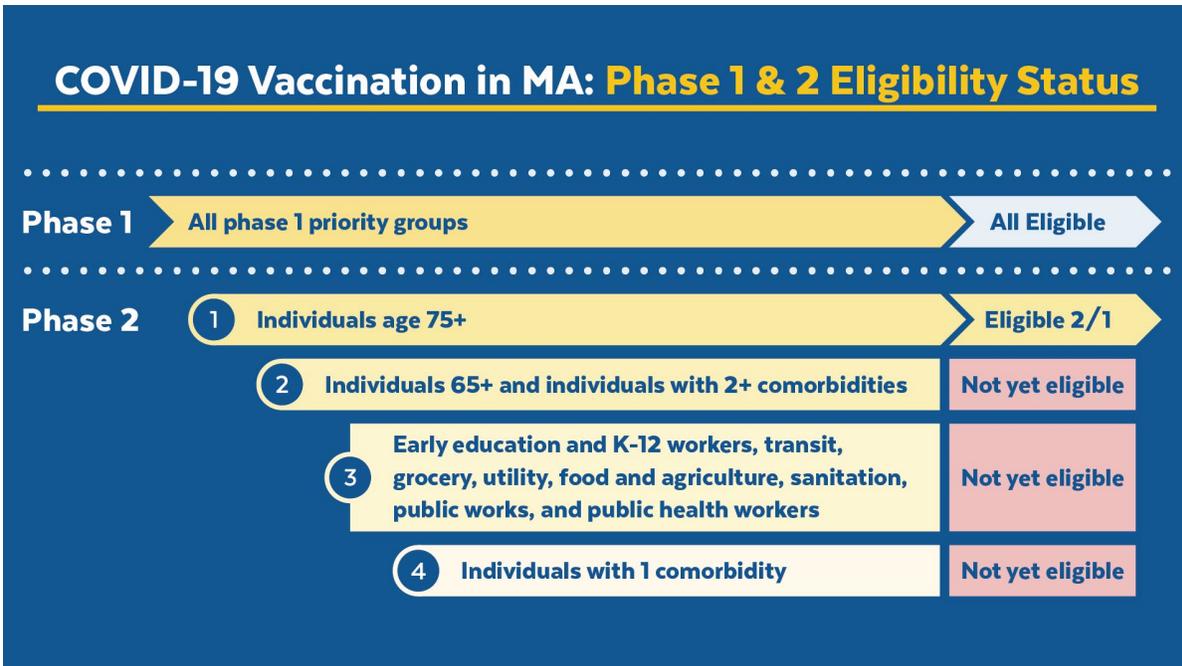
- Disposable masks are not designed to fit tightly and wearing more than one will not improve fit.

Combine a KN95 mask with any other mask.

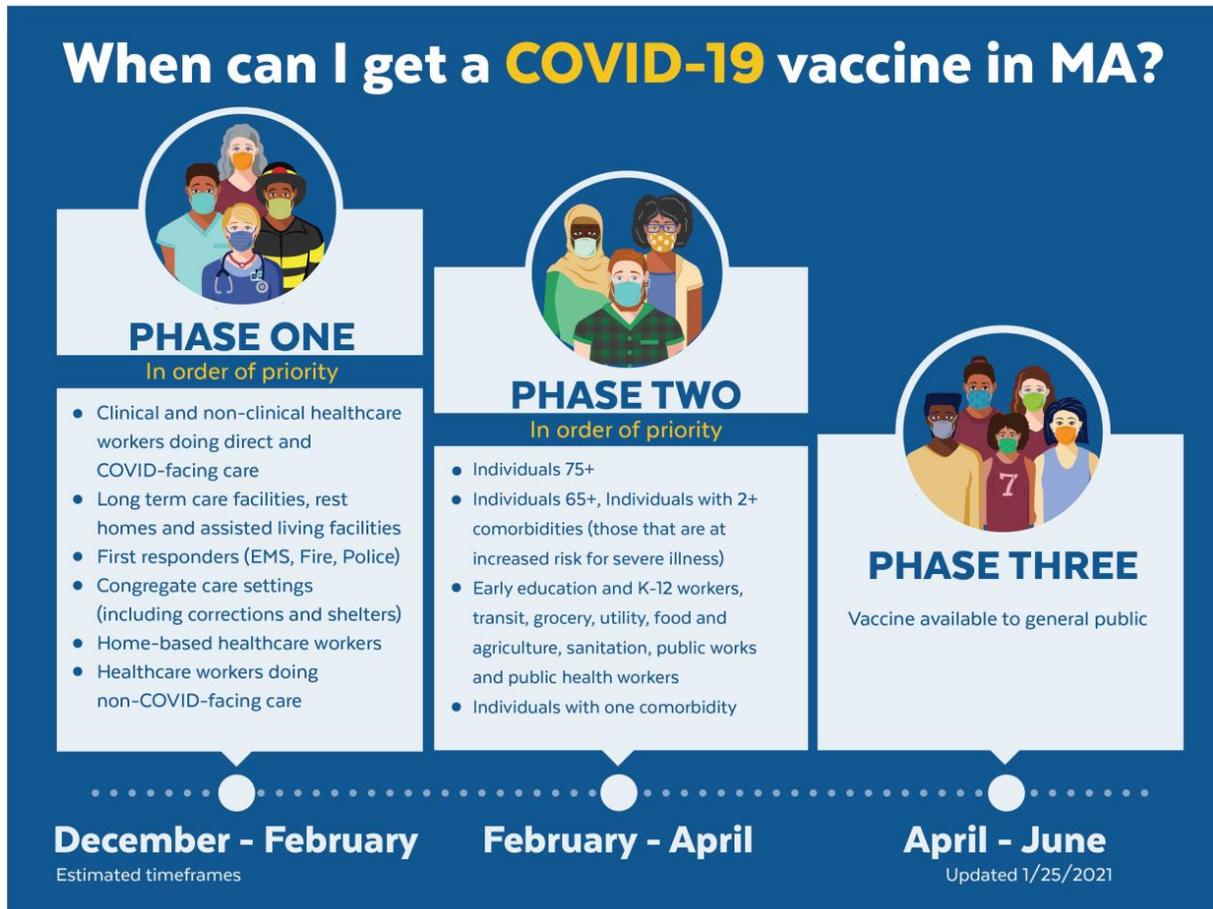
- Only use one KN95 mask at a time.



- **Current Status of Vaccination Priority Groups**



When can I get a COVID-19 vaccine in MA?



- **Everyone in Phase 1 & individuals 75+ can get the COVID-19 vaccine**

Massachusetts has started to vaccinate against COVID-19. We continue to expand eligibility to more groups of people, **but vaccine supply is severely limited**. At this [website](#), you will find tools to help determine when you are eligible, how to find a vaccination location, and how to prepare for your appointment.

Council on Aging staff is available to assist any vaccine-eligible seniors who need help navigating the scheduling process. Please call 508-261-7368.

Massachusetts Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line

The Governor's Administration has established a new call center to help residents 75 and older more easily schedule an appointment if they do not have internet or are unable to use the website at www.mass.gov/COVIDVaccine. The COVID-19 Vaccine Scheduling Resource Line is a dedicated telephone line available to residents 75 and older. The call center will be staffed with over 500 representatives who can provide live phone support to assist residents with booking an appointment. The line will be open Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM. Live call center workers will be available in English and Spanish, and 100 additional languages will be

available through translators. **Call center workers will have the same access to appointments that users will see on the public website.**

The line can be accessed by dialing 2–1–1 and selecting the prompt for “Help Scheduling a Vaccine Appointment.” Residents may have to wait on the line given expected high call volume. Once connected with a representative, the caller will be asked to confirm he/she is 75 or older and either has no internet access or otherwise cannot use the website to book an appointment. Call-takers will then use the state’s COVID-19 vaccine site map to find nearby locations and determine whether appointments are available. If no appointments are available within a distance the caller can travel, then callers will be offered the chance to be placed on a call-back list for the mass vaccination sites. Residents will receive a call-back as appointments become available at these sites. Due to high demand and limited supply, callers may experience significant wait times. The Administration will monitor wait times and make necessary adjustments.

This resource line is not to answer general questions about COVID-19 or provide individual health care advice. **The quickest and easiest way to schedule a vaccine appointment or check availability is to use the online system at mass.gov/covidvaccine.**

At this point, the Town does not have any vaccine for public distribution. Please go to the [COVID webpage](#) for vaccine information and updates.

- **Massachusetts Caregiver/Companion COVID-19 Vaccine Eligibility**

Effective Thursday, February 11th, an individual who accompanies a person age 75 or older to one of four mass vaccination sites to receive the vaccine will be eligible to receive the vaccine too, if they have an appointment booked. **Both the companion and the individual age 75 or older must have an appointment for the same day and both individuals must be present. Only one companion is permitted. The companion must attest that they are accompanying the individual to the appointment.**

- **Vaccine Information for the general public**

It will take time to get everyone vaccinated.

Before you are vaccinated, between doses, and even after you are fully vaccinated, we must continue [stop the spread of COVID-19](#). Wear a mask, wash your hands, avoid groups, and keep your distance.

[COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccination Locations](#)

[When can I get the COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

[COVID-19 frequently asked questions](#)

[How to prepare for your COVID-19 vaccine appointment](#)

ACT NOW!



WEAR A MASK



STAY 6 FEET APART



AVOID CROWDS