



December 11th, 2020

Important Dates:

December 15th: Town Meeting

December 10th-18th:
Hannukah

December 25th: Christmas

December 25th–January 1st:
Kwanzaa

The Week in Numbers:

Total Number of COVID-19 Cumulative Cases* in Uxbridge Residents	330
Average Number of New Cases per Day**	3.02
Positivity Rate in the past 14 days**	6.01%

*confirmed by [PCR testing](#)

** Information from 12/10 [state data](#)

About this Publication:

The COVID-19 Update is produced by the Uxbridge Board of Health with the help of volunteers from the [Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps](#). The Update provides residents relevant and timely updates about the COVID-19 situation, other public health topics and related news from the community. It is published every other Friday, and is accurate up to the time of publication.

COVID-19 Update

Status Update

Vaccination Station

Widespread vaccination in the United States is drawing near. The [UK has already started vaccinating](#) elderly and healthcare workers and [Canada has just approved](#) the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine. The [FDA](#) approved the COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, December 10th, and there is a phased [roll-out plan for distribution](#). Massachusetts just released a [three-phase vaccine distribution](#) plan for residents:

- Phase 1: Starting in December, healthcare workers, long term care facilities and emergency services will be vaccinated
- Phase 2: Starting in February, individuals with at least 2 high risk factors for COVID-19, early education teachers and staff, the elderly and essential workers (e.g. grocery store, food services, transportation) will be eligible to be vaccinated
- Phase 3: Starting in April, the general public will be able to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

Once someone is vaccinated with two doses of the vaccine, it can take a week or two for the vaccine to become active in the body. Being vaccinated does not necessarily mean that life can return to “normal”, and the [CDC is asking](#) people who have been vaccinated to continue to follow the guidance in place in order to minimize the spread of COVID as much as possible. Only when we have reached herd immunity ([see previous newsletter](#)) may we begin to ease up on restrictions and begin to restore our economy.

I am sure some of us are feeling nervous or hesitant about the vaccines, especially since they were developed much quicker than vaccines in the past. It is important to remember that these vaccines are safe and have been proven to be effective. In a recent twitter thread, [Dr. Theresa Chapple explains](#) the difference between rushed vaccine development and unsafe vaccine development. There are [some key differences](#) between the Moderna and the Pfizer vaccines, but both are showing high rates of protection against COVID-19.

New CDC Quarantine Guidelines

The CDC has released new [quarantine guidelines](#) for individuals exposed to COVID-19 through close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual. The new guidelines state that exposed people should quarantine for 10 days following exposure, as long as symptoms do not appear. Alternatively, exposed individuals may quarantine for 7 days if they have a negative test. The test must occur on day 5 following exposure or later. The CDC still recommends watching for symptoms for 14 days following exposure and quarantining for 14 days if possible.

Risk Assessment

Are you wondering how risky an upcoming social engagement may be during this pandemic? Neurobiologist Samantha Yammine, PhD, created an online [risk assessment quiz](#) you can take to determine the risk of an activity! It includes questions such as, “will we be outside?” and “will everyone be wearing a mask the whole time?” There are also recommendations on how to reduce your risk!

New Resource

The new website [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/StopCOVID19) provides residents and local business owners with information on how to stop the spread, state restrictions on gathering sizes, testing locations and materials that can be printed for display in apartment complexes, restaurants and community areas.

High Risk Towns

There are 62 cities and towns in Massachusetts that are now considered high risk for community transmission of COVID-19. These include Uxbridge, Northbridge, Douglas, and Blackstone. For a full list of these communities [click](#) here.

Helpful Links

- [Uxbridge COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [Uxbridge Support Services](#)
- [Massachusetts DPH](#)
- [Mass.gov/StopCOVID19](https://www.mass.gov/StopCOVID19)
- [CDC COVID-19 Info](#)
- [Report Workplace Violations](#)



Questions?

Contact the
Board of Health at:
508-278-8600 ext. 8
boh@uxbridge-ma.gov

Thanksgiving Spike

[Millions of people traveled for Thanksgiving](#) and gathered with loved ones outside of their household. As a result, we should expect to see a large surge of COVID cases in the coming weeks. As COVID symptoms may take up to 14 days following exposure to present, we are just starting to see the impact of Thanksgiving travel and family gatherings on COVID-19 cases. There is a sharp increase in COVID cases on top of a trend of rising upcoming winter holidays. It is incredibly important to continue to follow mask guidelines and reduce contact with those you don't live with as cases increase.

A Ripple Effect

Epidemiologists are predicting that over the next several weeks we may see a dramatic increase in the spread of COVID due to people spending more time indoors, less vigilance in distancing and mask wearing, and more gatherings involving people outside the immediate household.

As COVID cases increase, the ripples that spread from each person with COVID will produce turbulence that rocks everyone's boat. Each instance of quarantine can affect family income, children's education, and everyone's emotional health, in addition to the physical effects of COVID. The impact increases if that person is sick, increases more if they are hospitalized, and increases explosively if they die. The impact of [social isolation](#) and [economic disruption](#) on each person is different but can be devastating. The economic impact on [households](#) and [small businesses](#) is [substantial](#).

In some areas of the country the health care system is being stretched to the limit. Expected [emergency care may be reduced](#) resulting in preventable long-term harm from injuries or heart attacks. In general, COVID patients require more care for longer periods of time than the "average" patient. Deaths occur in isolation and the already stressed hospital workers are often stand-ins for family when death occurs. For a brief commentary on the [impact of this fall's surge](#).

This frightening voyage into the turbulent waters of the current COVID storm is meant to underscore the nature of a pandemic, that it affects each of us, and that as the storm intensifies, so does the potential damage to us all. It also means that it will take all of us working together and looking out for each other to ride out the storm..



Good News Corner



A bit of light in this dark time: Kaavan, the "world's loneliest elephant", has been relocated from a barren zoo enclosure in Pakistan to a wildlife sanctuary in Cambodia. See [photos of his arrival](#), and read [about](#) why Cher (yes, Cher the singer), helped pay for Kaavan's release to Cambodia.

