

December 24th, 2020

Important Dates:

December 25th: Christmas

December 25th–January 1st: Kwanzaa

December 28th: National Call a Friend Day

The Week in Numbers:

Total Number of COVID-19 Cumulative Cases* in Uxbridge Residents	379
Average Number of New Cases per Day (per 100,000 people)**	42.6
Positivity Rate in the past 14 days**	7.43

*confirmed by [PCR testing](#)

**Information from 12/17 [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

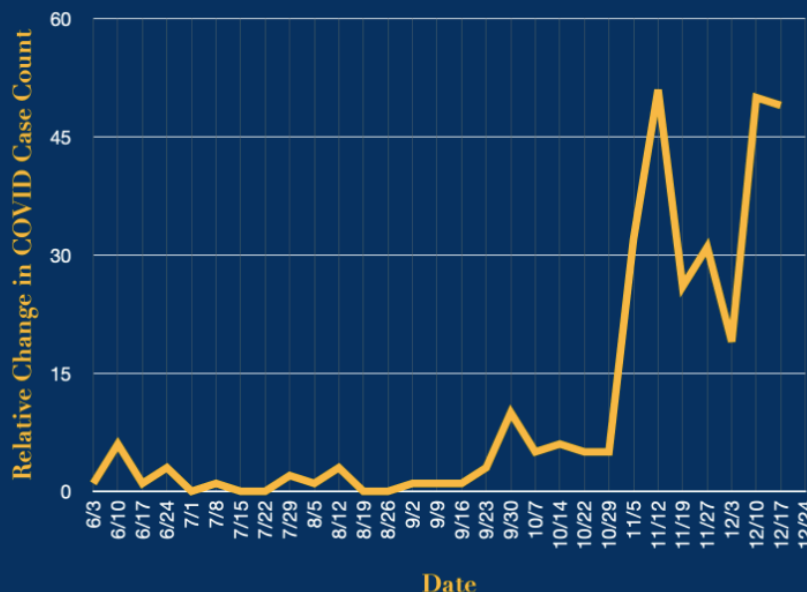
Status Update

Revisiting the Vaccination Station

With both the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines being approved and distributed in the US, many people are asking, “do I still need to wear a mask once I’m vaccinated?” The answer to this is YES. This is because the virus can still be spread person to person. The vaccines have been shown to prevent inoculated people from developing COVID-19 symptoms with the current social distancing and mask regulations in place. However, vaccinated individuals could still be a carrier of the virus and potentially infect others - especially those who have not been or could not be vaccinated! In order to continue to stop the spread of COVID-19 and protect our communities, we all must continue to wear masks and practice social distancing. The CDC has a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page about the COVID-19 vaccinations with additional information.

To try to efficiently distribute the vaccine throughout the state, Massachusetts has extended vaccination authority to medical students, nursing students, and EMTs.

Uxbridge New COVID-19 Cases (Weekly)



Data Source:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting# covid-19-weekly-public-health-report->

The Uxbridge board of health has added some new features to their website, including [this graphic](#) (shown above). To see more information on COVID-19 in the Uxbridge community, check out the [Uxbridge Board of Health COVID-19 page](#).

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

Testing, Testing, 1-2-3

Testing for COVID-19 virus is one strategy to control the spread of the disease by identifying who may be spreading it. But what does a test actually tell you? A woman waiting in line at a drive-through testing site was asked why she was getting tested. She said family was coming to visit and she wanted to get tested before they arrived "just to make sure". While we have come to rely on testing to identify who has the virus, her feeling reassured by a test result is not clear cut.

A PCR test (the most common COVID-19 test) identifies the genetic material of the virus itself. When a PCR test is POSITIVE, it is highly likely the person tested has COVID-19 and should isolate themselves to prevent spreading it. The test is likely to remain positive for weeks, whether the person is infectious or not. A person becomes non-infectious depending on the timing, duration, and severity of symptoms. If no symptoms develop, isolation ends [ten days after testing positive](#).

That's the easy part. A person whose PCR test is NEGATIVE can only know that they likely did not have an active COVID-19 infection on the day of that test. It does not mean they cannot become ill in the following days and later test positive. To reassure others (and perhaps yourself) that you don't have the disease because your test was negative is practically meaningless.

Daily testing, which gives results within minutes to hours, would give us more valuable information, but daily testing is not available to most of us. Some antigen (not PCR) tests check for proteins on the surface of viral cells (not the virus itself). These tests can give rapid results which are almost as accurate as the PCR tests. Antigen tests are being used by CVS and the MA Dept. of Public Health in certain circumstances, because of their rapid turnaround time, which makes contact tracing more effective. (See [COVID-19 diagnostic testing - Mayo Clinic](#) and [Mayo Clinic Q and A: Different types of COVID-19 tests – Mayo Clinic News Network](#) to get a brief explanation of the types of tests available and how they work.)

All of the current tests have been given [Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA](#). There are now 224 different brands of PCR tests, 13 brands of antigen tests, and 56 brands antibody tests available for use.

For good reasons to get tested see [Test for Current Infection | CDC](#)

For testing sites in MA see [COVID-19 Test Site Locator \(arcgis.com\)](#)



The Fall Annual Town Meeting (part 2) was held outdoors on December 15th at McCloskey field in a two-sided tent to diminish the chance of COVID-19 spread. In spite of the chill, the meeting was well-attended and the debates were lively.

Thanks to all Town employees and volunteers who made this possible!