March 2, 2022

The MMS will continue to monitor developments related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) and the response by state and federal agencies. For current information, including updates from NEJM, visit the dedicated page on the MMS website: massmed.org/covid-19.

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Public Health

New CDC tool rates each county's COVID-19 level to guide precautions, including masking

The Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC) last week announced a new [COVID-19 Community Level tool](#) that rates each county in the United States as high, medium or low COVID-19 risk to help communities decide on prevention steps. Levels are determined by three factors: hospital beds being used, hospital admissions, and the area's total number of new COVID-19 cases.

Massachusetts shows eight low level counties (Hampden, Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, and Dukes), six medium level (Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, Worcester, Nantucket, and Suffolk), and none at high level.

Regarding masking, the CDC recommends:
• In “medium” level counties, people at high risk of severe illness should talk to their health care provider about masking and other precautions.

• In “high” level counties, all people are advised to wear a mask indoors in public.

• Counties at the “low” level are offered the overall guidance that applies to all counties: “People may choose to mask at any time. People with symptoms, a positive test, or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask.” All are advised to stay up to date with vaccines.

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**CDC updates list of high-risk medical conditions for severe COVID-19**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated the list of certain underlying medical conditions that are associated with a higher risk for severe COVID-19 outcomes. Additional disabilities included within this list are primary immunodeficiency and physical inactivity. The list of underlying medical conditions is not exhaustive and people with other conditions may be at increased risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. CDC will update the list based on the latest evidence as the science evolves.

**To learn more visit:**

- [Science Brief: Evidence Used to Update the List of Underlying Medical Conditions Associated with Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19](#)
- [NIH COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines](#)

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**FDA authorizes revisions to Evusheld dosing**

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has revised the emergency use authorization for Evusheld (tixagevimab co-packaged with cilgavimab) to change the initial dose for the authorized use as pre-exposure prophylaxis (prevention) of COVID-19 in certain adults and pediatric patients. Based on the most recent information and data available, Evusheld may be less active against certain Omicron subvariants. The dosing
regimen was revised because available data indicate that a higher dose of Evusheld may be more likely to prevent infection by the COVID-19 Omicron subvariants BA.1 and BA.1.1 than the originally authorized Evusheld dose.

Reminder: COVID-19 oral antiviral medications now offered at certain Walgreens, CVS, and Price Chopper pharmacies

Providers can now refer patients for oral antiviral (OAV) medications at select Walgreens, CVS, and Price Chopper pharmacies. Any provider can electronically submit a prescription to one of the stores that has an on-hand supply of treatment courses. The Massachusetts COVID-19 Therapeutics locator will list the Walgreens, CVS, and Price Chopper stores that have OAV medications on-hand. If the Walgreens you sent the prescription to has no available supply, the store will notify you and direct you to another Walgreens location with available supply. If the CVS you sent the prescription to has no available supply, the store will redirect you to the CVS antiviral store locator to find another store nearby with supply. Please note, currently, only Price Chopper store number 55 in Great Barrington has OAV. The Department of Public Health (DPH) will continue to expand additional pharmacies as supply increases.