**NEW GUIDANCE – RESPIRATORY ILLNESS PROTOCOLS (Including COVID-19)**

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the MA Department of Public Health (DPH) have recently updated their **guidance for acute respiratory viral illness (i.e. COVID-19, flu, and RSV-respiratory syncytial virus)**.  The following is 1. guidance if you or your family members contract a respiratory illness, and 2. a list of simple activities to follow to help prevent the spread of the viruses.

**If you are sick with a respiratory virus** (fever, sore throat, cough or runny/stuffy nose):

* Stay home and wear a mask around others if you are in close proximity.
* Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer to avoid spreading the infection. Clean high touch surfaces often i.e. door knobs, handrails.
* Use a tissue or your elbow (not your hands) to cover your cough or sneeze.
* Resume normal activities/return to work\* when:
  + You are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications, AND
  + Your symptoms are improving.

\*When returning to work, be respectful of others in close proximity to you indoors as you continue to recover i.e. wear a mask.

**Helpful Hints to prevent the spread of respiratory infections:**

* Stay updated on your flu and COVID-19 vaccinations, and RSV for infants and adults 60+ years old.
* Avoid crowded indoor spaces during peak respiratory illness seasons.
* Encourage air circulation indoors by opening a window or using air purifiers.
* Cover coughs/sneezes, wash hands frequently, and sanitize high touch surfaces.

**For additional information**:

MA Dept. of Public Health [Protect yourself and others from getting sick | Mass.gov](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/protect-yourself-and-others-from-getting-sick)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention [Respiratory Virus Guidance (cdc.gov)](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/guidance/respiratory-virus-guidance.html)