

UPDATE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)



Stay informed. Take precautions. Stay safe.

Dear Members,

The CDC has recently issued guidances related to free COVID-19 testing, isolation, and mask recommendations and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has provided information regarding expiry date extensions on COVID-19 tests. Listed below are the highlights of these notices.

- The CDC [Operation Expanded Testing](#) (OpET) program provides access to free COVID-19 PCR tests for assisted living residents and staff, through December 31, 2022. The program provides specimen collection supplies, shipping materials, laboratory testing, and results reporting, and providers may receive up to a four-week supply at a time. Providers must enroll through the OpET [screening testing program](#) through this hub: [Northeast](#).
- The CDC issued a revised COVID-19 [guidance](#) earlier this week for testing, isolation, and other mitigation strategies.
- The CDC recommends continuing the practice of testing in high-risk settings, irrespective of vaccination status.
- All individuals with a known or suspected exposure or who experience symptoms should test.
- Anyone who is symptomatic or tests positive should isolate for five or more days and infected persons should wear a mask and avoid contact with those at high risk for severe illness.
- Individuals may stop isolating after five days if no symptoms develop or if symptoms are improving and the individual has been fever-free for 24 hours.
- Individuals should avoid being in the presence of people who are more likely to become very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11, regardless of when the isolation ends.
- It is also recommended that individuals continue to wear a mask through day 10 or after two sequential negative tests were taken 48 hours apart.

The following is related to the extensions of the expiry dates of COVID-19 tests. Please review this information and follow up by making adjustments to your test inventory within your community.

- The iHealth Rapid Tests expiration dates have been extended from 9 months to 12 months.
- The BinaxNow tests expiration dates have been extended from 12 to 15 months.

[Here is a link](#) to the FDA with a document listing the expiration dates for each

of the iHealth lot numbers. You may find this helpful as you adjust your inventory.

The full notice from the Department of Public Health can be accessed below:

Dear Long-Term Care Colleagues,

The Department of Public Health is reaching out to you in follow up to yesterday's Long-Term Care monthly call discussion on antigen test expiry date extensions. Attached is additional information from [Abbott](#) and [iHealth](#) regarding extensions of their expiry dates. Please review and make any adjustments to antigen test inventory within your facility, as appropriate.

Sincerely,

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

If you have any questions, please contact us at Mass-ALA@mass-ala.org

**The information provided in this COVID-19 update is solely for general informational purposes to assist in understanding the evolving guidance regarding the current COVID-19 public health threat. It is not intended to be a primary public health or medical resource but is provided as a clearinghouse for or compilation of various guidance issued by official and related sources.*

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