STAY THE COURSE – YOUR CHOICES MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Next week, the Governor’s Advisory Board will issue recommendations on re-opening the MA economy under a four-phase approach, based on public health guidance. For the foreseeable future, many physical distancing policies and procedures will still be with us. Think of these strategies as a dial being adjusted, not a switch being turned on or off.

As the weather warms and impatience with physical distancing grows, please remember that the safest choice to mitigate COVID-19 cases in our region is to continue staying home, limiting contact/maintaining physical distancing, and only conducting essential business. Any good news you are seeing regarding case count plateaus in our region is the result of physical distancing efforts conducted weeks back. The decisions you make now will impact the case numbers we see weeks down the road.

When conducting essential business or going outside for fresh air and exercise, remember: maintain a minimum 6 foot distance from people whenever possible, wear a face covering, and avoid frequently touched surfaces.

Read more about face coverings here: https://www.mass.gov/news/wear-a-mask-in-public

YOUNG PEOPLE AND COVID-19

Every day we continue to learn more about the impacts of SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. Recent studies are showing that children can experience other inflammatory illnesses and complications that could be linked to exposure to this virus.

On Thursday, May 14th, the Commissioner of the MA Department of Public Health acknowledged that the novel coronavirus which causes COVID-19 may be linked to a pediatric multi-system inflammatory syndrome (PMIS) that has features which overlap with Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome, and declared confirmed and suspect cases of PMIS to be immediately reportable to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

As health professionals continue to learn more about the impacts of the novel coronavirus, please continue to do your part by maintaining physical distancing.


HANDLING PUSHBACK FROM TEENS AROUND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Here’s some things you can do if you get pushback from your teens about staying home:

- Help them understand that the only way physical distancing works is if everyone does it. Point out that while young people don’t seem to get as sick from the virus, there’s no guarantee of that — and people with mild illness, or illness without symptoms, can spread it to others.
- If they don’t want to listen to you, engage others they might be more likely to listen to.
- Help them think through other ways they can connect with friends without seeing them in person. There are lots of ways to use tech to do this.
- Acknowledge that this is hard for their mental health. Talk about ways to manage this.
- Set a good example — don’t do any socializing yourself!
- Reach out to the parents of their friends, to be sure that everyone is on the same page.
- Set rules — and enforce them.


For more on supporting your teens during this time, visit: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Teens-and-COVID-19.aspx
COMMUNITY TRACING COLLABORATIVE

Last month, the Baker-Polito Administration, DPH, Partners in Health and local Boards of Health launched the Community Tracing Collaborative (CTC), a first in the nation statewide contact tracing initiative to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

As the CTC continues its contact tracing work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, it is critical that Massachusetts residents answer the phone when a contact tracer calls or texts. Contact tracers will only reach out from phone numbers with 833 or 857 area codes, and the phone’s caller ID will say MA COVID Team. The Community Tracing Collaborative will not ask for social security numbers or health insurance information.

To learn more about the MA COVID Team and the Community Tracing Collaborative, visit: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-the-community-tracing-collaborative