



**Town of Rochester**  
**Board of Health**  
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To: Town of Rochester Residents

From: Karen Walega, MPH, CHO, RS  
Health Director

Date: March 16, 2020

Re: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Social Distancing  
Recommendations for Rochester Residents

The Town of Rochester has taken steps to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission and slow its spread through our community. There are a number of things Rochester residents can do to further protect our community. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Massachusetts Department of Health recommend all persons:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds while humming Happy Birthday twice. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze using a tissue or inner elbow, not your hands.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).

COVID-19 is very contagious. It can be transmitted from an infected person before they feel sick. Therefore, it is very important that residents practice "social distancing" that limits close contact with others. This will slow the spread through the community.

Symptoms according to Centers for Disease Control (CDC) appear 2-14 days after exposure. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health reports that symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath and pneumonia in severe cases. If you have symptoms, contact your physician's office first so that they can prepare for you.

We strongly urge Rochester residents to **avoid gathering in groups** where it would be difficult for participants to maintain social distance. This includes, for example: community organization events, house parties, birthday parties, and indoor "play dates" for children from more than 2 families.

Governor Baker declared that gatherings of more than 25 people will be banned in the State until April 6<sup>th</sup>. This applies to Civic, Public, Leisure and faith based events, as well as sporting contests, and fairs. Restaurants that offer food will only be allowed to offer takeout and delivery.

With schools closed and many organized activities cancelled, we urge Rochester Residents to avoid gathering in groups especially indoors. Remember to keep a distance of 6 feet separation from other individuals. Parents of children are encouraged to make childcare arrangements that minimize the number of children.

Please be aware that information is changing daily so please log on to: *mass.gov/coronavirus* .

Guidance and information regarding COVID-19 is being updated frequently. We recommend the following resources:

- The Massachusetts Department of Health COVID-19 website:  
<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus website:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>