



CLINICAL OPERATIONS UPDATE: COVID-19 AUGUST 25, 2023 FIFTEEN WEEKS FOLLOWING END OF PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

MONITORING DATA

Dr. Meghan Gump and I are continuing to monitor public health data for COVID-19. Data currently available includes hospitalizations in Massachusetts and wastewater monitoring. We will use data to inform any decisions we need to make regarding a change in practice at VMG (Data is available at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>).

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Surgical masks remain available for patients at the entry to the health center along with hand hygiene dispensers. Patients are to be directed to wear a mask for any visit of COVID-19 concern, suspicion or confirmed disease.
- Surgical masks are available at entry points for staff and providers as needed.
- If a patient requests you wear a mask while delivering clinical care, please respect their preferences by doing so.
- N95 masks are available in our centers, clinical areas for care of patients with suspicion or confirmed COVID-19.
- Gloves, gowns and eye protection remain available as needed.
- The next round of fit testing will take place this fall at our health centers for those that wear N95 masks. Information will follow from your center.
- At this time there are no plans to require masks to be worn at all times in the health centers, unless directed to do so by MA DPH, another regulatory requirement or a dramatic change in the presence of disease.

QUARANTINE GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19

- There have been no changes to the quarantine guidelines for COVID-19.
- Exposure and illness are to be reported to your manager/coordinator/team leader and the guidelines followed for your circumstances.

COVID-19 VACCINES FALL 2023

- It is anticipated there will be a new COVID-19 vaccine this fall, and as early as September available at local pharmacies. Important to note if someone receives a COVID-19 booster now, it may delay a person's eligibility to receive a new vaccine in this fall. More will be known when recommendations are published.
- VMG will not supply the new COVID-19 vaccine for adults when it is made available this fall, patients should be referred to a local pharmacy.