



Your Post-Vaccine Lifestyle

Frequently Asked Questions

Q – Is it safe to visit with my family and friends?

Our human connections are critical to our mental health. The answer to this question depends upon the involved people's priorities in terms of their willingness to accept the risk of gathering over the risk of continued isolation and loneliness. To think about that risk, we created a risk scale, taking into account that the elderly and those with underlying medical problems are more vulnerable to developing severe complications of COVID-19. If you do decide to gather, be sure to follow the state's gathering limits. You can find the latest guidance from the state on gatherings [here](#). Other things that decrease the overall risk include gathering outdoors or in a well ventilated space, keeping gathering sizes smaller, wearing masks and keeping your interactions limited to a select group of trusted individuals.

Q – Is it safe to stop wearing a face mask?

Unfortunately, no one is giving out special hats we can wear to announce to others our vaccination status. When in public or at work, we must continue to set a good example by wearing our mask and keeping our distance from others. You must follow both state and hospital policies on mask wearing, even if you know that everyone in the room with you has been vaccinated. In private settings, however, you can use the above risk scale on gatherings to guide your decision on whether to wear a mask around certain individuals. Adding masks, distancing and staying outside or in well-ventilated spaces further decreases the risk associated with gatherings.

Q- Is it safe to hug my parent/grandparent/child/grandchild/etc.?

Many of us miss hugging our loved ones, yet doing so is not without risk. Using the risk scale above, you may choose to maintain a safe distance and thus avoid hugging or you may not. Now that you are vaccinated, you can feel comfortable knowing that you are VERY unlikely to need hospitalization or ICU care in the unlikely event that you become infected with COVID-19 as a result of that close contact. It is important to weigh your priorities and those of your loved ones when you make decisions about hugging.

Q- Is it safe to go to a gym/restaurant/movie theater?

If you are fully vaccinated, it's very unlikely you will get seriously ill if you go to a public place like a gym, restaurant or movie theater. However, in such settings, it's impossible to know whether others are immune to COVID-19 or how vulnerable they are to severe complications of COVID-19 were they to become infected. So while it is safe for you, and permitted in the state of Massachusetts, strict mask wearing and distancing should be practiced. This is to protect the unvaccinated and/or vulnerable in the unlikely event that you have asymptomatic infection.



Get the vaccine. Wear a mask. Save lives.

 Home Health Foundation
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Q- Is it safe to travel?

It is probably pretty safe for you to travel once you are fully vaccinated, but the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC currently discourage travel for all Americans. Infection rates are extremely high, the incidence of new infection due to variant viruses is increasing, and we are therefore in a “race between infections and injections.” It is critical not to do anything that could risk moving a variant virus around the country or the world, and also important for us as health care workers to set a good example for others. That being said, some people need to travel for personal reasons, and you can feel confident in the protection provided by your vaccine as you continue to practice public health measures such as mask-wearing and hand hygiene. At this time, Massachusetts has not changed its rules about quarantine or “test as alternative to quarantine” after leaving the state. Other states are increasingly doing so. Check state web sites for details and know that they are rapidly changing. You can find the state’s travel order guidance [here](#).

Q- Do I need to quarantine and/or be tested if I am exposed to someone with COVID-19?

The CDC has made a recommendation that fully vaccinated individuals (beginning two weeks after their last dose) do not need to be tested or to quarantine after an exposure. As of March 5, 2021, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has not yet adopted this approach. We will inform you the moment state guidelines on this are released.

Q- Do I need to be tested if I develop symptoms that might be consistent with COVID-19?

Yes, even if fully vaccinated.

Q- Do I need to wear the same level of PPE while caring for patients?

Yes. Wellforce policy on PPE has not changed. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health still requires a mask and eye protection for all patient care. We require the use of an N-95 for the care of all patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and those undergoing an aerosol generating procedure.

Q- I’m worried about how long my vaccine will work, and will it be effective against the new variants of COVID-19?

Health authorities are closely watching the vaccinated population for signs of breakthrough infection that might indicate either that vaccine effect is wearing off, or that a new variant is evading the immunity provided by the vaccine. The data so far are promising. Experts believe it is likely that your vaccine will protect you for at least a year, maybe several years, and that it will protect you from severe illness and death due to variants, even those that show ability to partially evade the immune system. If there are signals to the contrary, vaccine companies will be ready with booster vaccines, and the FDA has said that the companies will not need to conduct long clinical trials again to prove they are safe.