



# News Release

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## Connecticut Department Of Public Health Stresses That Residents Should Utilize COVID-19 Tools During The Upcoming Spring Holidays And Gatherings

HARTFORD, Conn.— With the current uptick of COVID-19 cases—coupled with the upcoming schedule of spring holidays and family gatherings—the Connecticut Department of Public Health is reminding residents of the tools currently in place to help contain the spread of the virus.

DPH Commissioner Manisha Juthani, MD, said the United Kingdom — which tends to precede COVID-19 trends in the United States — began to see an increase in COVID-19 cases driven by the BA.2 subvariant in late February. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, BA.2 currently makes up more than 85 percent of U.S. cases.

“BA.2 has been spreading faster than the original omicron variant and that state’s test positivity has continued to increase over the past seven days,” Commissioner Juthani said. “DPH has been ramping up for this increase in terms of readying our statewide testing program and deploying messaging about second boosters and the availability of COVID-19 therapeutics.”

Commissioner Juthani noted that some of the COVID-19 tools in place include:

- **Second booster doses:** In late March, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its recommendations regarding a second booster dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for those 50 and older or immunocompromised individuals. During the recent omicron surge, those who were boosted were 21 times less likely to die from COVID-19 compared to those who were unvaccinated and seven times less likely to be hospitalized. Individuals who are eligible for this booster are encouraged to visit [ct.gov/covidvaccine](https://ct.gov/covidvaccine) to locate a site near them. Nearly 800 locations are available to administer boosters.
- **Test to Treat:** As part of the newly launched nationwide [Test to Treat](#) initiative, residents can get tested for COVID-19, and if they are positive and treatments are appropriate for them, can obtain a medication from a health care provider, all in one location. Connecticut currently has more than 40 Test to Treat sites, which are located at select pharmacies, urgent care centers and federally qualified health centers throughout the state. (more)

Residents also may visit their primary care provider who also can prescribe a COVID-19 therapeutic. A web-based site [locator](#) is now available to make it easier to find Test to Treat locations. Those who may have difficulty accessing the internet or need additional support locating a Test to Treat site can call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489) to get help in English, Spanish, and more than 150 other languages – 8 am to midnight ET, seven days a week.

- **COVID-19 Self-Test Kits:** For those looking for access to more self-test kits, visit the federal website <https://www.covid.gov/tests> to order free at-home testing kits. As of March 2022, households are eligible to order a total of eight kits. If you already ordered four kits in January and/or February, you are eligible to order four more.
- **State Supported Testing Sites:** There are currently 23 State Supported COVID-19 testing sites located throughout Connecticut. These testing sites are drive-through and/or walk up and no appointment is needed. Additionally, there is no cost for the testing. Commissioner Juthani said that DPH and its testing partners can quickly increase up the number of sites in the coming weeks if the need arises. The locations and hours of each State Supported testing site can be viewed at [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus)

Commissioner Juthani added that it's important to understand and follow proper protocols for those who believe they have contracted COVID-19 or are not fully vaccinated and have had a close contact with someone who has COVID-19. [CDC guidelines](#) recommend that if you develop respiratory or other [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#), or test positive for the COVID-19 virus, that you stay away from gatherings or public places and avoid travel for at least five days and isolate from others in your household to the extent you can. Also, remember to wear a well-fitting mask that completely covers your nose and mouth if you must be around others indoors. The CDC also advises that you should take further precautions, including masking, through at least day 10 after testing positive for COVID-19.