



FAQs from the Board of Health
Updated: March 26, 2020
Stay Home. Stop the Spread. Save Lives!

1) Why is hand washing so important?

As experts say, the virus's fate is in your hands. The soap acts in two ways. First, it is a surfactant which loosens the virus from your hands and lets it go down the drain. Second, the virus's genetic material which causes the infection is contained within a spherical membrane; soap dissolves this membrane rendering the genetic material impotent.

Frequent washing will dry out your skin and cracked skin is an accessible point for bacteria and viruses to enter. So wash your hands thoroughly and use moisturizer.

2) What are the current protocols for getting tested?

As of March 23, according to MDPH, "clinicians now have more flexibility to determine which patients should be tested without having to call DPH's Epi Line. With national labs now being approved by the FDA to conduct testing, clinicians can submit specimens for testing directly to these labs. This change will enable more people to be tested and for more tests to be conducted. With more clinical labs in Massachusetts working to get FDA approval, even more testing capacity will be coming online soon."

The BOH received the following information from Nashoba Associated Boards of Health on March 20, 2020:

"[AFC Urgent Care] are seeing respiratory and COVID patients via TeleHealth. Patients can call us at 508.658.0764 to register. Once registered, one of our nurses will call to triage their symptoms and after that they will be arranged to see one of our providers via TeleHealth. Patients will have access to a drive up flu, strep and if needed COVID testing onsite."

In addition, a drive through testing site has been established at a CVS Pharmacy in Shrewsbury.

3) How long will public and private schools be closed?

On March 25, 2020, Governor Baker announced all public and private schools, as well as non-emergency childcare centers, must remain closed until at least May 4th.

4) How long does the virus live on inanimate objects?

This answer comes from Harvard Medical School (link at end of document):

How long the new coronavirus can live on a soft surface — and more importantly, how easy or hard it is to spread this way — isn't clear yet. So far, available evidence suggests it can be transmitted less easily from soft surfaces than frequently-touched hard surfaces, such as a doorknob or elevator button.

According to the WHO, coronaviruses may survive on surfaces for just a [few hours or several days](#), although many factors will influence this, including surface material and weather.

That's why [personal preventive steps](#) like frequently washing hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and wiping down often-touched surfaces with disinfectants or a household cleaning spray, are a good idea.

5) What cleaning products should be used and how often?

An approved list of cleaners can be found at:

<https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>

There is no firm recommendation on frequency of cleaning. EPA says follow manufacturer's instructions for time of contact of cleaner with surface.

CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfection can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

6) Where will the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) be for outbreak? Who will be authorized for admittance?

The EOC will be at the Public Safety Building. Those authorized for admittance will be mission critical personnel.

7) Is there a protocol in place for volunteers to deliver supplies/food to residents in quarantine/isolation?

Residents should have a two-week supply of food, medications, and pet supplies in their homes. If something else is needed while in isolation or quarantine, please rely on friends. In emergencies, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), run by Pat Natoli at the Public Safety Building, may be available to assist.

Prepackaged Minuteman hot meals can be delivered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 11am and 12pm by volunteers who have been trained in proper protocol for delivery personnel. To get a hot lunch delivered, please call the COA at 978-456-4120 and ask to be added to the list.

8) What preparation steps are prudent?

Residents should have a two-week supply of food, medications, and pet supplies in their homes. Residents should also plan for childcare assistance if you are unable to provide it. Similarly, residents should plan for pet care in the event that you cannot provide it.

9) What pharmacies will deliver to Harvard?

The Harvard Board of Health has contacted the pharmacies below to confirm that they deliver prescriptions to Harvard. Both also confirmed that prescriptions can be collected at their store by a non-family member who is able to provide identifying information (e.g. the patient's street address or date of birth).

Based on standard delivery schedules, the pharmacies prefer that prescriptions arrive before noon for same day delivery. A small delivery fee may apply.

Ayer Family Pharmacy
13 Park Street,
Ayer MA
978-391-4061

Acton Pharmacy
563 Mass Ave
Acton, MA
978-263-3901

Speak to your pharmacy to see if they also offer this service.

10) Can public meetings be held remotely?

Governor Baker has signed an executive order modifying the open meeting law and indicated how local government agencies & committees can continue to carry out essential functions and operations during the COVID-19 outbreak. The executive order can be found here:

www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-emergency-order-modifying-the-states-open-meeting-law

In Harvard, Town Hall, the Library, and the schools are closed to the public until at least April 3, 2020. The Town Administrator, Tim Bragan, has issued several memoranda regarding restrictions applying to town hall and other municipal facilities. Please see the town web site for more information: www.harvard.ma.us/home/news/coronavirus-covid-19

11) What should someone who receives a positive test for COVID-19 expect?

The public health nurses from Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (NAHB) are responsible for monitoring the State's communicable disease surveillance system – MAVEN for Harvard and other member communities. They receive laboratory reports from the MAVEN system for individuals tested for COVID-19. For those individuals testing positive in our community, the Nurses will work with the affected individuals to educate and explain to them the State's

requirements of isolation (positive cases) and quarantine (individual who may have been exposed but are currently well). The Nurses will also establish a procedure to monitor those individuals for the period of their quarantine or isolation. The Nurses will need to follow up with all individuals on isolation or quarantine for a minimum of 14 days. Updating the MAVEN system on these activities is also required.

In an effort to protect first responders who may come into contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19, NAHB will provide the address of those individuals for who have a positive laboratory test for COVID-19 to the police/fire and EMS departments to provide first responders some additional situational awareness when responding to calls.

12) What is the difference between isolation and quarantine and what are the expectations and limitations?

Isolation means the separation of a person or group of people known or reasonably believed to be *infected with a communicable disease and potentially infectious* from those who are not infected to prevent spread of the communicable disease. Isolation for public health purposes may be voluntary or compelled by federal, state, or local public health order (MADPH).

Isolation is for an individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Please see Appendix A for the MADPH guidance document for restrictions on such an individual as well as household members.

Quarantine in general means the separation of a person or group of people reasonably believed to have been *exposed to a communicable disease but not yet symptomatic*, from others who have not been so exposed, to prevent the possible spread of the communicable disease (MADPH).

Quarantine is for an individual who has been exposed to someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19. Please see Appendix B for the MADPH guidance document for restrictions on such an individual as well as household members.

13) What is the definition of COVID-19 "presumptive" positive result?

As of March 22, 2020 more private laboratories are offering testing. Prior to this, the State Public Health Lab's result was the first step in the screening for the virus and if the test was positive it was considered as a "presumptive positive" and specimens were then sent to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for confirmation. As of March 22, 2020 this definition of a presumptive positive test is being relaxed as more independent labs are performing the test.

14) How long is it taking to get results?

The time to get results is improving day by day as more laboratories are conducting the tests. The length of time to get results depends on where you are tested. Most results should be available in 3-4 days, and this time may be shortened

15) What is social distancing?

Everyone is reminded that you are to maintain a 6 feet distance from others. This physical distance does not mean you are not to interact with others, it means person-to-person interactions should occur when the individuals are 6 feet apart. People must limit group gatherings to not more than 10 people.

16) Can I go outside?

We are fortunate to live in Harvard with so much open space. People can go outside but please maintain safe physical distance of 6 feet.

17) Is Nashoba Regional Dispatch aware to ask residents if they could have been exposed?

Yes.

18) What steps should COA be undertaking for their building and vehicles?

a) Hildreth House

As the caretakers of the MOST vulnerable population in town, the CoA has been disinfecting daily at Hildreth House. This includes all tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, anything we touch - and have been doing it for the last 3 weeks. Our staff have also disinfected their own work space (computer, desk, phone, etc.).

b) COA Van

The van drivers have disinfected the van daily (in the morning), and between riders. Guidance for cleaning vehicles can be found at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Drivers have the right to ask passengers if anyone has been in contact with the virus or has traveled out of the country, and can refuse rides to passengers that exhibit symptoms. Drivers seat passengers as far apart as possible in the vehicle.

c) Harvard Help drivers and vehicles

Due to the COVID-19 virus, the COA is recommending the suspension of rides by Harvard Help volunteer drivers. There are one or two that we know are being taken for necessary medical rides (cancer treatment, dialysis), however, the COA will not send any other requests to Harvard Help drivers until further notice.

19) How long can a child carry the virus?

The BOH could not find information to answer this question. However, Harvard Medical School has answered two related questions, shown below.

a) What is the incubation period for the coronavirus?

An incubation period is the time between being exposed to a germ and having symptoms of the illness. Current estimates suggest that symptoms of COVID-19 usually appear around five days on average, but the incubation period may be as short as two days to as long as 14 days

b) Can people who are asymptomatic spread coronavirus?

Yes, a person who is asymptomatic may be shedding the virus and could make others ill. How often asymptomatic transmission is occurring is unclear that is why maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet is so important.

20) How can I get additional questions answered?

Please direct future questions to: asktheTA@harvard.ma.us

21) Can I ask questions directly to the MA Department of Public Health?

Yes. Massachusetts residents are urged to use 2-1-1 for information, resources, and referrals regarding COVID-19. Operators are staffing this hotline 24/7 and translators are available in multiple languages. Residents with questions can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone or use the live chat option on the Mass 2-1-1 website.

RESOURCES

WHO: www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html

White House COVID-19 Guidelines: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>

State Department Travel Advisory Global Level 4 Health Advisory – DO NOT TRAVEL (19MAR20): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>

MADPH: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus

Harvard Medical School: www.health.harvard.edu/blog/as-coronavirus-spreads-many-questions-and-some-answers-2020022719004

News and analysis sources:

Washington Post Free Coronavirus Updates:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/mapping-spread-new-coronavirus/?itid=hp_hp-visual-stories-desktop_vs3%3Ahomepage%2Fstory-ans

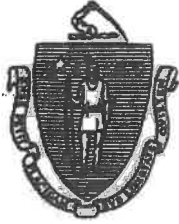
Johns Hopkins CSSE COVID-19 case maps:

<https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

Center for Strategic & International Studies Commentary and Questions (updated daily):

<https://www.csis.org>

Appendix A: MA DPH Information and Guidance for Persons in Isolation due to COVID-19



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences
305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

**Information and Guidance for
Persons in Isolation due to COVID-19**

You are required to isolate (separate yourself) from other people because you have been diagnosed as a confirmed case of infection with 2019 Novel (new) Coronavirus (COVID-19) or because you had a high-risk exposure to COVID-19 and now have symptoms.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus. It is spread through respiratory secretions (mucous and droplets from coughs and sneezes from an infected person and can cause serious illness such as pneumonia (lung infection), and in some rare cases, death.

You must remain in isolation until a public health authority (the Massachusetts Department of Public Health or your local Board of Health) tells you can leave your home. A public health authority will be in contact with you daily and will conduct another assessment 14 days after the date your infection is confirmed. A public health authority will confirm that you may leave your home once the risk of infecting others is determined to be low.

During the isolation period, you may not have visitors in the location where you are isolating. If you must share living quarters with another person, then that person will be subject to quarantine. If someone in your home is a young child, pregnant, immunocompromised, or has a chronic heart, liver, lung, or kidney condition, or is over 65 years of age, that person is at particular risk if they have contact with you during isolation. If anyone you have contact with fits this description, please discuss this with your local board of health or the Massachusetts Department of public health so that steps may be taken to protect these individuals.

Your local Board of Health and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health will work with you to identify anybody, including household members, who are considered to have been exposed and will make required quarantine recommendations.

This information sheet provides you with information about what *to do* and *not to do* while you are in isolation. If you have questions after reading this, you can call your local Board of Health, or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health which is available 24/7 at 617-983-6800.

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While you are in isolation you should follow these instructions:

1. Do not leave your home except for urgent medical care. If you must leave your home for urgent medical care, wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less. Call the healthcare provider before you go and tell them that you have COVID-19 infection. For the protection of others, you should use a personal car or call an ambulance to travel to your healthcare provider. Do not take public transportation, ride shares (e.g. Uber or Lyft), or taxis under any circumstance.
2. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available if you must be in contact with another person. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less.
3. Do not have visitors in your home.
4. If possible, other people should not be living in your home while you are in isolation there.
5. Do not share a bedroom or bathroom with anyone else.
6. Do not share towels or bed sheets/blankets with other people.
7. Wash your laundry separately from the laundry of other people.
8. Do not share eating or drinking utensils with other people. Wash utensils normally in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
9. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and throw tissues away in a lined waste container. Then wash your hands.
10. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Anyone you have to come in contact with in your household should:

1. Remain aware of their health and watch themselves for:
 - a. A fever (temperature over 100.3 degrees). They should take their temperature in the morning and at night.
 - b. Other symptoms such as a cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, stiff or sore muscles, headache, or diarrhea.
2. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available they should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
3. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available, when they are in close contact with you if you cannot wear a mask. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less. They should be careful to only touch the parts of the mask that go around the ears or behind the head. Do not touch the front of the mask. They should wash their hands immediately with soap and water after taking the mask off.
4. Wear disposable gloves if they need to have direct contact with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) or handle your dirty laundry. Remove the gloves carefully without touching the outside of the gloves, throw the gloves away, and wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

If anyone in your household develops any of these symptoms, contact the local health department or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at the phone numbers below.

If they need to seek medical care, they should call their healthcare provider before they go and tell them they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

Other advice to keep your germs from spreading:

1. Your gloves, tissues, masks, and other trash should be put in a bag, tied closed, and put with other household trash.
2. Your laundry may be done in a standard washing machine using warm water and detergent. Bleach may be used but is not needed. Do not shake out the dirty laundry and avoid having the dirty laundry touch anyone's skin or clothing.
3. Surfaces in the home that you touch or that become dirty with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) should be cleaned and disinfected with a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves when cleaning.
4. Your bathroom should be cleaned every day using a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves when cleaning.

How long should you follow these instructions?

You will need to remain isolated for as long as it is possible for you to spread the infection to others. A public health authority (MDPH or your local board of health) will be in contact with you daily and will tell you when you can stop isolating yourself. They will regularly re-assess you and will determine if you need to stay isolated or if the risk of infection to others is low enough that you can stop staying in isolation.

Questions?

Please call your healthcare provider, your local board of health or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with any questions.

1. Your healthcare provider

Name: _____
Phone number: _____ OR

2. Your local board of health (Town/City)

Town or City: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone number: _____ OR

3. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

On-call Epidemiologist
Phone: (617) 983-6800 (7 days per week/24 hours per day)

Thank you for your active cooperation in keeping yourself, your family, and your community healthy and safe.

Date provided to patient: _____

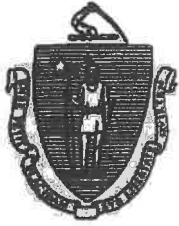
Provided by (name): _____

Any other specific instructions may be written in here or attached with additional sheets (the attachment of additional sheets should be noted here):

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Appendix B: MA DPH Information and Guidance for Persons in Quarantine due to COVID-19



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences
305 South Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

**Information and Guidance for Persons
in Quarantine due to COVID-19**

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

You are required to quarantine (separate yourself) from other people because you have been exposed to the 2019 Novel (New) Coronavirus (COVID-19). If you have COVID-19, you could spread it to people around you and make them sick.

COVID-19 is caused by a virus. It is spread through respiratory secretions (mucous and droplets from coughs and sneezes) from an infected person and can cause serious illness such as pneumonia (lung infection), and in some rare cases, death.

This information sheet provides you with information about what to do and not to do while you are in quarantine. If you have questions after reading this, you can call your local Board of Health, or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health which is available 24/7 at 617-983-6800.

During your quarantine period, you should not have visitors in your home. The other people who live in your home can continue to do their normal activities as long as they are not in contact with you, as described further below, and not also under quarantine. If you test positive for COVID-19 and someone comes into contact with you that person might also then need to be quarantined.

While you are in quarantine you should follow these instructions:

1. Do not leave your home except for urgent medical care. If you must leave your home for urgent medical care, wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available. Call the healthcare provider before you go and tell them that you are quarantined due to COVID-19 exposure. For the protection of others, you should use a personal car or call an ambulance to travel to your healthcare provider. **Do not take public transportation, ride shares (e.g. Uber or Lyft), or taxis under any circumstance.**
2. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available, if you must be in contact with other people. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less.
3. Do not have visitors in your home.
4. To the extent possible, stay six feet away from other people in your home. If absolutely necessary, have one person help you and do not have contact with other people in your home. Wear a mask, such as a surgical mask, if available when in the same room as that person. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less.

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5. If possible, use a separate bedroom and bathroom. Do not share towels or bed sheets/blankets with other people in your home. Wash your laundry separately from the laundry of other people in your home.
6. Do not share eating or drinking utensils. Wash utensils normally in a dishwasher or by hand with warm water and soap.
7. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw tissues away in a lined waste container. Then wash your hands.
8. Wash your hands frequently using soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time you wash. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Anyone you come in contact with (including anyone in your home) should:

1. Wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds often. If soap and water are not available they should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
2. Wear a mask, if available, when they are in close contact with you if you cannot wear a mask. They should be careful to only touch the parts of the mask that go around the ears or behind the head. Do not touch the front of the mask. They should wash their hands immediately after taking the mask off. If not available try to maintain a distance of six feet from others; when this is not possible, limit your time being closer to people to five minutes or less.
3. Wear disposable gloves if they have to have direct contact with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) or handle your dirty laundry. Remove the gloves carefully without touching the outside of the gloves, throw the gloves away, and wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.

Anyone you come in contact with (including anyone in your home) should remain aware of their health and watch themselves for:

- a fever (temperature over 100.3 degrees). They should take their temperature in the morning and at night.
- other symptoms such as a cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, stiff or sore muscles, headache, or diarrhea.

If anyone you come in contact with has any of these symptoms, contact the local health department or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at the phone numbers below.

If they need to seek medical care, they should call their healthcare provider before they go and tell them that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

If they do not have any of the symptoms described above, they do not have to stay home and instead may continue with their normal activities.

Other advice to keep your germs from spreading:

1. Your gloves, tissues, masks and other trash should be put in a bag, tied closed, and put with other household trash.
2. Your laundry may be done in a standard washing machine using warm water and detergent. Bleach may be used but is not needed. Do not shake out the dirty laundry and avoid having the dirty laundry touch anyone's skin or clothing.
3. Surfaces in the home that you touch or that become dirty with your body fluids (saliva/spit, mucous, urine, feces, vomit) should be cleaned and disinfected with a household disinfectant according to the label directions. Wear gloves while cleaning.
4. Your bathroom should be cleaned every day using a household disinfectant according to the directions on the label. Wear gloves while cleaning.

How long must you follow these instructions?

You will need to remain quarantined for at least 14 days from the date of last exposure. A public health authority (MDPH or your local board of health) will be in contact with you daily and will tell you when you can stop quarantining yourself. They will regularly re-assess you and will determine if you still need to stay quarantined or if the risk of infection to others is low enough that you can leave your home.

Questions?

Please call your healthcare provider, your local board of health or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with any questions.

1. Your healthcare provider

Name: _____
Phone number: _____ OR _____

2. Your local board of health (Town/City)

Town or City: _____
Contact Person: _____
Phone number: _____ OR _____

3. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health

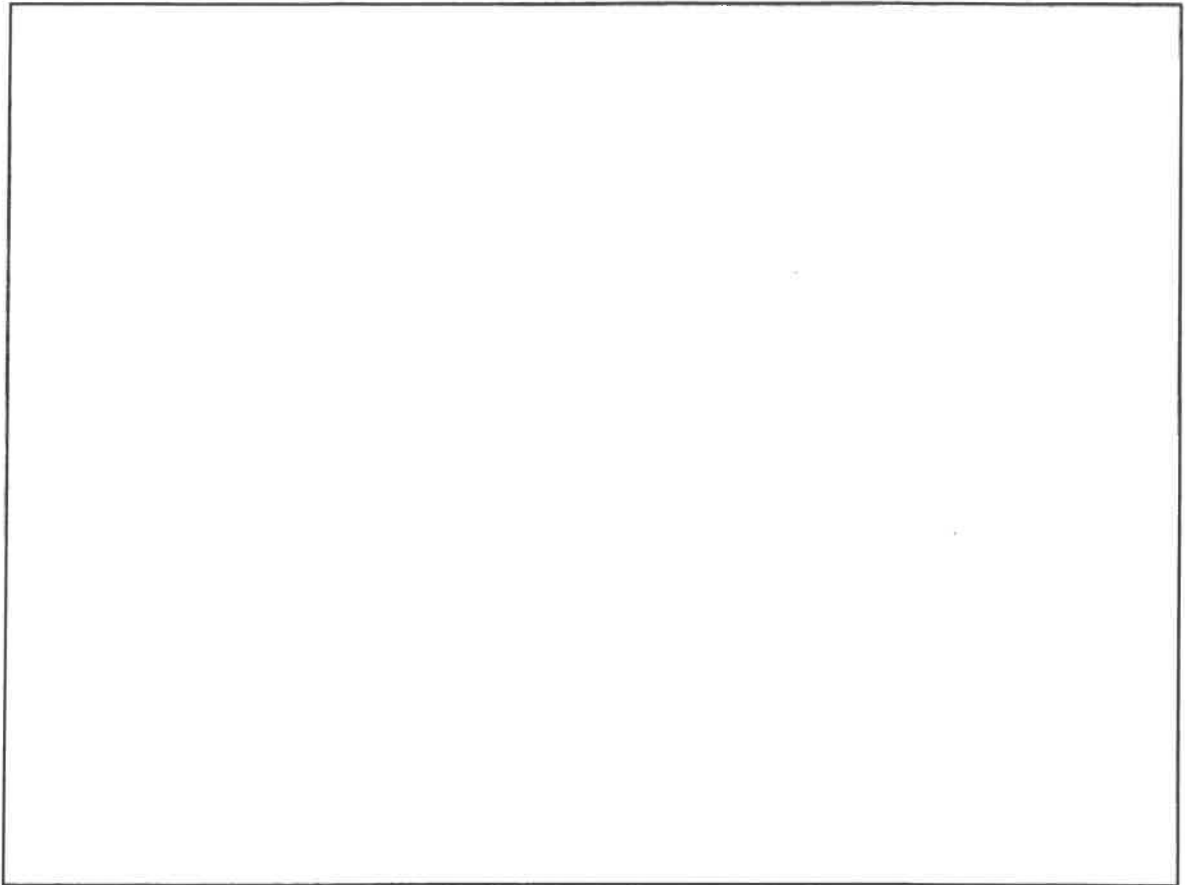
On-call Epidemiologist
Phone: (617) 983-6800 (7 days per week/24 hours per day)

Thank you for your active cooperation in keeping yourself, your family, and your community healthy and safe.

Date provided to quarantined individual: _____

Provided by (name): _____

Any other specific instructions may be written in here or attached with additional sheets (the attachment of additional sheets should be noted here):



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