

ADVICE FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

The COVID Delta variant is more contagious and causes more severe disease among people who are **not vaccinated**. The Delta variant is now responsible for 83% of COVID-19 cases in the U.S., according to the nation's top health officials.

"A pandemic of the unvaccinated" is how Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has described the current condition of COVID-19 in the U.S.

The best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from the coronavirus and its variants is to get vaccinated!

UPDATE ON COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS

Please contact 1-855-BMC-LINK (1-855-262-5465) to speak with a trained healthcare professional about COVID-19 symptoms, testing, or vaccination.

Booster Shots

COVID-19 Vaccine booster shots are available for the following Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine recipients who completed their initial series at least 6 months ago and are:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work in [high-risk settings](#)
- Age 18+ who live in [high-risk settings](#)

Pediatric Vaccination:

The CDC and FDA have approved the **Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5 to 11**. For additional information visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccinations-for-children-ages-5-11>

Where Can I Get a Booster?

The federal government's [Vaccines.gov](#) website lets you search for vaccine and booster providers by zip code, with links to appointments, and many sites permit walk-ins. Many county health clinics, doctor's offices and pharmacies, including large chains like CVS, Walgreens and Walmart, are taking vaccine appointments, and lots of them offer walk-in vaccinations.

Check with Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington and BMC in Pittsfield for booster shot appointments.

Masking Policy

BHS is requiring all patients and visitors entering a BHS facility to wear a new medical-grade mask issued by BHS. This mask order has been mandated by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

By distributing new masks, we can be confident that the masks of all patients and visitors have not degraded or been soiled or compromised. Masks will be issued at the entries to all inpatient and outpatient facilities and will also be available at the front desks of our BHS practices.

Visitation Policy

Visitation will now be limited to one healthy visitor per patient at both BMC and Fairview Hospitals in adult medical/surgical units and in pediatrics.

No changes are being made to visiting hours, which continue to run from 12:00 Noon to 8:00 PM daily in the adult medical surgical units and from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the Critical Care and Progressive Care units. Please visit this link to view the current visitation policy.

<https://tinyurl.com/VisitationUpdate-2021-08-04>

Vaccination Reminder

Vaccines are available at the following BHS locations:

Pittsfield COVID-19 Testing Center

505 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201

Sunday-Saturday, 8:30am-7:30pm.

(Between 4:00pm and 7:30pm, vaccines are administered at Urgent Care.)

North Adams COVID-19 Testing Ctr. Fairview Hospital in Gt. Barrington

98 Church St., No. Adams, MA 01247 29 Lewis Ave., Gt. Barrington, MA 01230

Sunday-Saturday, 8:30am-4:00pm Monday-Friday, 9:00am-2:00pm

Walk-ins are welcome at all vaccination locations. Learn more at

<https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/vaccination-information>.

Testing Reminder

Every day of the week at:

Pittsfield COVID-19 Testing Center North Adams COVID-19 Testing Center

505 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 98 Church Street, North Adams, MA 01247

Sunday-Saturday, 8:30am-4:00pm Sunday-Saturday, 8:30am-4:00pm

Fairview Hospital in Great Barrington

475 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Sunday-Saturday, 8:00am-12:00pm

Please remember, you must schedule an appointment for a test.

Call 1-855-BMC-LINK or schedule your appointment directly through the BHS Patient Portal.

Turnaround time for tests is typically 24-36 hours. Learn more at

<https://www.berkshirehealthsystems.org/covid-19-testing-centers>.

The FEMA COVID-19 Funeral Assistance program: Any COVID-19 related death that occurred after January 20, 2020 is eligible for assistance with expenses up to \$9,000 per funeral, or a maximum of \$35,000 for assistance related to more than one death.

RESOURCE: We've created a webpage with more information about the program, links to FEMA guidance, fact sheets in multiple languages, and information about obtaining or amending a death certificate in Massachusetts: <https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>