COVID-19: What Do I Need To Know?

Community Resources

Senior Center
While the Senior Center is temporarily closed to the public, please feel free to contact us if you have questions or need assistance. Call 413-322-5625 and we will try to point you in the right direction, or put you in touch with our social worker. You can also follow us on Facebook, or check out our website.

Meals on Wheels
If you’re having trouble keeping up your food supply, or are wary about going to the supermarket, consider this service through WestMass ElderCare, even if only temporarily. If you’re a regular at the Senior Center for lunch, let them know. Call 538-9020 to sign up.

PVTA
PVTA offers more than just the regular bus service. If you’re having trouble finding rides to essential services, see if their door-to-door Senior Service is an option for you. To find out more, or to schedule a ride, call 739-7436.

Grocery Shopping Hours
Some stores are offering special hours for seniors to shop during the hours they are the cleanest and most stocked.

Stop & Shop: Every day, from 6 to 7:30am
Big Y: Every day, from 7 to 8am
C-Town: Every day, from 8 to 9am
*C-Town also delivers! Call 538-8287.

What is it called? You may have seen it referred to by three terms: coronavirus, novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. “Coronavirus” is the name given to a large subset of viruses (including the common cold). “Novel Coronavirus” is a nod to the fact that it is a virus new to humans (“novel” here means new). COVID-19 is the official name given to the disease, 19 because it arrived to the US in 2019.

Is it just another flu? There has been a lot of likening COVID-19 to the flu. While they can be transmitted in the same way, COVID-19 takes longer to show symptoms, even if you have the virus, meaning it is easier to transmit unknowingly. The hospitalization rate is 10 times that of the flu, as is the death rate. There is also no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19.

What are the symptoms? Symptoms vary drastically. Some signs could be a dry cough, a fever, fatigue and shortness of breath. Others have described body aches, and diarrhea. A majority of cases have minimal or no symptoms, but can still transmit the disease to others.

What can I do to help prevent the spread?
- Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Stay home whenever possible. Try to make your grocery trip once a week, or once every two weeks. Other essential trips would be for medicine or necessary doctor’s appointments.

Why? The goal of staying at home is to lessen the burden on our healthcare professionals, and to ensure supplies like gloves, masks, and ventilators, are available to help all who need it, by slowing the number of cases.
Tax Work Off Applications Still Available
Applications are available online, or folks can request a copy be mailed to them. Submissions are accepted by mail or by email, to rodriguezn@holyoke.org. Part of the application is making a copy of the applicants driver’s license, which can happen at a later date, so you do not need it to submit your application. The deadline for submission remains the same, April 30.

Census 2020: Help Shape the Future
April 1 marks Census Day in the US! By this date, every home in the country will have received their 2020 Census documents, but you can respond in three ways: by phone, by mail or online. The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. Visit www.2020census.gov for more information.

Massachusetts State Income Tax Filing Deadline Extended to July 15
The AARP Tax Prep Assistance Program that was taking place at the Senior Center has been cancelled, unfortunately. However, the federal government has extended the tax filing deadline from April 15 to July 15, and the Massachusetts state government has followed suit. Governor Charlie Baker, Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Senate President Karen Spilka and House Speaker Robert DeLeo announced an agreement to extend the 2019 state individual income tax filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15 due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. This income tax relief is automatic and taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms to qualify. Individuals with questions or concerns regarding taxes can contact the Massachusetts Department of Revenue at (617) 887-6367 or send a secure e-message through MassTaxConnect.

Check Symptoms with Buoy Health Care Tool
The Baker-Polito Administration announced the launch of Buoy Health’s new online resource for residents to check their symptoms and connect with the next appropriate health care resource. This tool does not replace emergency medical care, but it may be used as a support for residents during the COVID-19 outbreak to connect them with appropriate health care resources if they display coronavirus symptoms. Buoy Health’s online 24/7 tool is free for Massachusetts residents and uses current COVID-19 guidance from the CDC and DPH.
Go to: https://www.mass.gov/how-to/check-your-symptoms-for-covid-19-online and click “Check your symptoms online.”

MassHealth Launches PCA Help Hotline
MassHealth has established a dedicated hotline through MassOptions to connect MassHealth PCA Consumers to services in the event their PCA is unavailable. Consumers can call 1-844-422-6277 and will be connected to home health services in their region. MassHealth has also updated its policies to temporarily suspend the PCA overtime cap and provide flexibility around home health aide training & certification requirements to streamline the hiring process and allow family members to be considered for hire.

ZOOM Chair Yoga with Debra Vega
If you miss your fix of Chair Yoga, look no further. Our Friday Yoga instructor will offer online classes through the month of April. Check out our Facebook page for a clickable link (and a helpful video on how to join a Zoom call)!
Fridays, 10:00 am
April 3 - May 1
Join through Zoom at: https://us04web.zoom.us/j/568039012
Meeting ID: 568 039 012
No activity ticket required

The Senior Center is temporarily closed to visitors. If you need assistance, please call us at 322-5625 and leave a message. A staff member will return your call.