



CITY OF BOSTON
Office of the Mayor
Martin J. Walsh

March 21, 2020

Dear Residents,

This is a difficult time for our families, our friends, our neighborhoods and our communities. As a City, now is the time to come together, and look out for one another. I want to explain what the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic means for you and your family, and how you help stop the spread of the virus in Boston.

We're urging people to exercise caution and take care of themselves. There are simple things everyone can do that will make a big difference:



- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid shaking hands.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes into your elbow or with a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Please remember what **social distancing** involves: avoid crowds of any kind, and keep a distance of at least 6 feet from other people when you're out.
- If you think you are sick, call your doctor or 311 to be connected to the Mayor's Health Line. We're asking people to call first, before going to the emergency rooms so our ERs don't get overwhelmed.
- We're also asking people not to call 911 unless they have a medical emergency. Boston EMS does not conduct testing for COVID-19.

What I want people to remember is that it's not just about keeping yourself healthy. By taking these precautions, you're also helping to keep our entire city healthy. And most importantly, you're helping to keep the most vulnerable people in our community safe: especially the elderly, and people with underlying medical issues.

In Boston, we're taking this situation extremely seriously. Boston Public Schools are closed and will re-open on Monday, April 27. A list of meal pick up locations is attached for families who need to pick up meals for their children. We are following Governor Baker's statewide emergency order prohibiting gatherings of more than 25 people and prohibiting on-premises consumption of food or drink at bars and restaurants through April 5.

This is a rapidly evolving situation, and circumstances and emergency orders may change. **We will continue to update residents through [boston.gov/coronavirus](https://www.boston.gov/coronavirus)**, robocalls to senior residents, social media (including @marty_walsh and @HealthyBoston on Twitter and City of Boston Facebook), AlertBoston text messages, and regular updates through the media. **Sign up for text alerts by texting BOSCOVID to 99411.** If you are unsure of any information you've heard, please call 3-1-1, the Mayor's Help Hotline.

I thank everyone who's helping us: the first responders and medical professionals, the families and neighbors, the teachers, the community leaders, and all who are showing what it means to be Boston strong. We're doing all we can to keep Boston healthy and safe. On behalf of the city we love, thank you for doing your part.

Sincerely,

Mayor Martin J. Walsh