

# COVID-19 Updates

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CITY OF NEWTON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

# Current COVID-19 Epidemiologic Picture

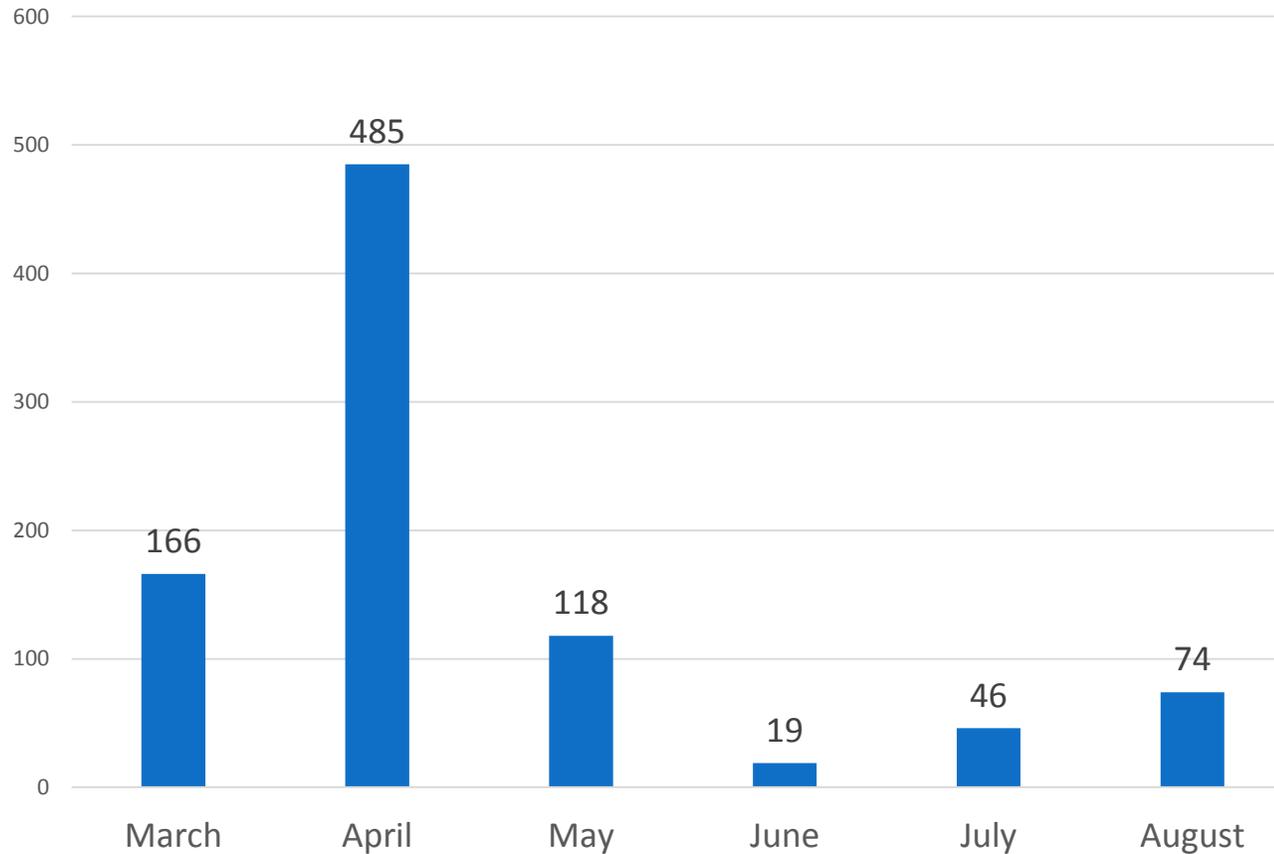
## Newton cases

- 942 (through 9/13/20)
- 1.9 average daily incidence rate per 100,000 (past 14 days, ending 9/5)
- .16 % positivity rate (past 14 days ending 9/5)

## Massachusetts cases

- 122,904 (through 9/13/20)
- 4.6 average daily incidence rate per 100,000 (past 14 days, ending 9/5)
- .97% positivity rate (past 14 days ending 9/5)

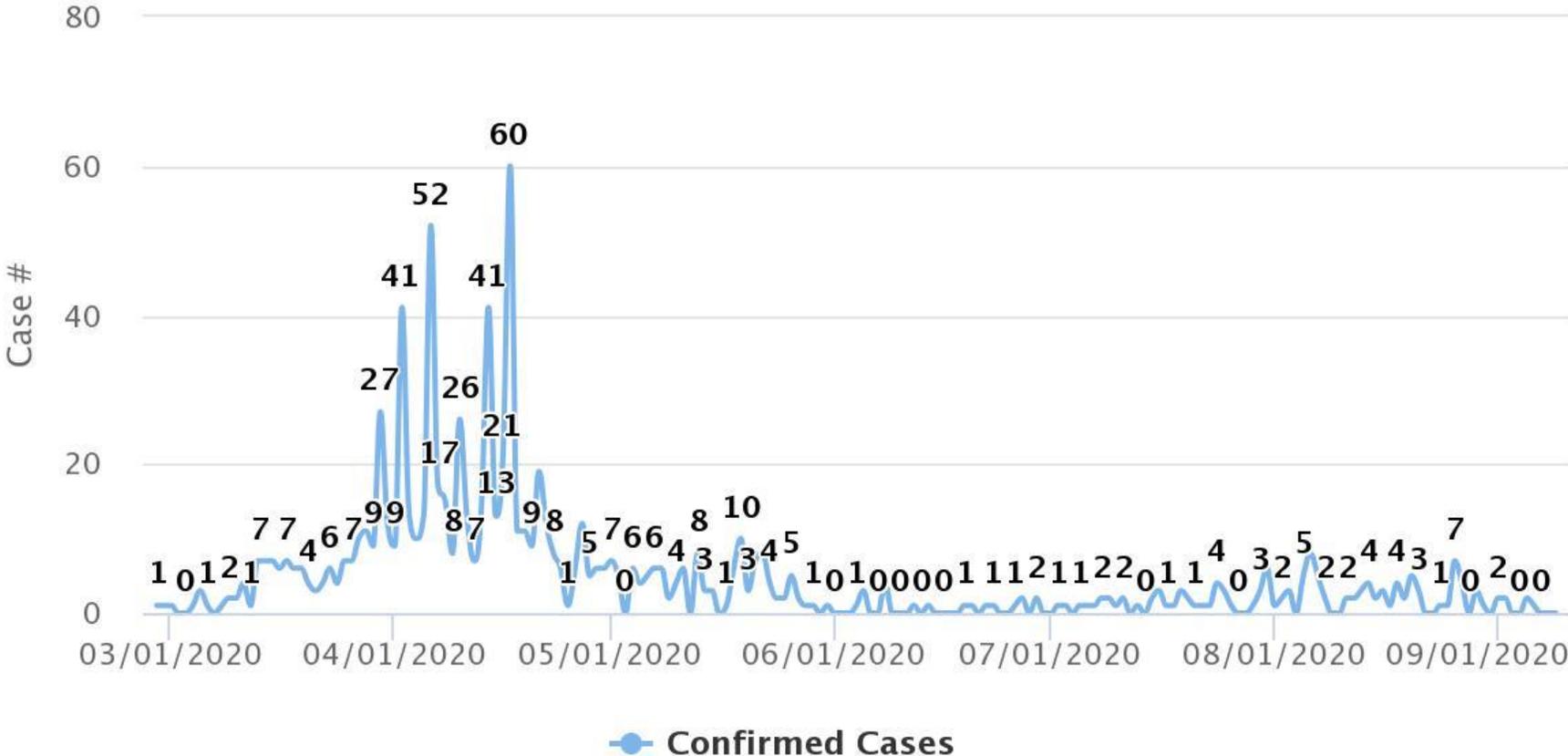
# Newton Confirmed Cases by Month\*



\*Cases by symptom onset or test date. Counts by month may change as new information is obtained about city/town or residents or cases are de-duplicated. Does not include months where case count is less than 5 or months not yet complete. Data current through 9/9/2020.

# Newton Cases by Symptom Onset Date

City of Newton, MA 2020



Graph data through 9/9/2020

Newton: GREEN

Total Case Count: 911

Two Week case Count: 24

Average Daily Incidence Rate Per 100,000: 1.87

Relative Change In Case Count: Lower

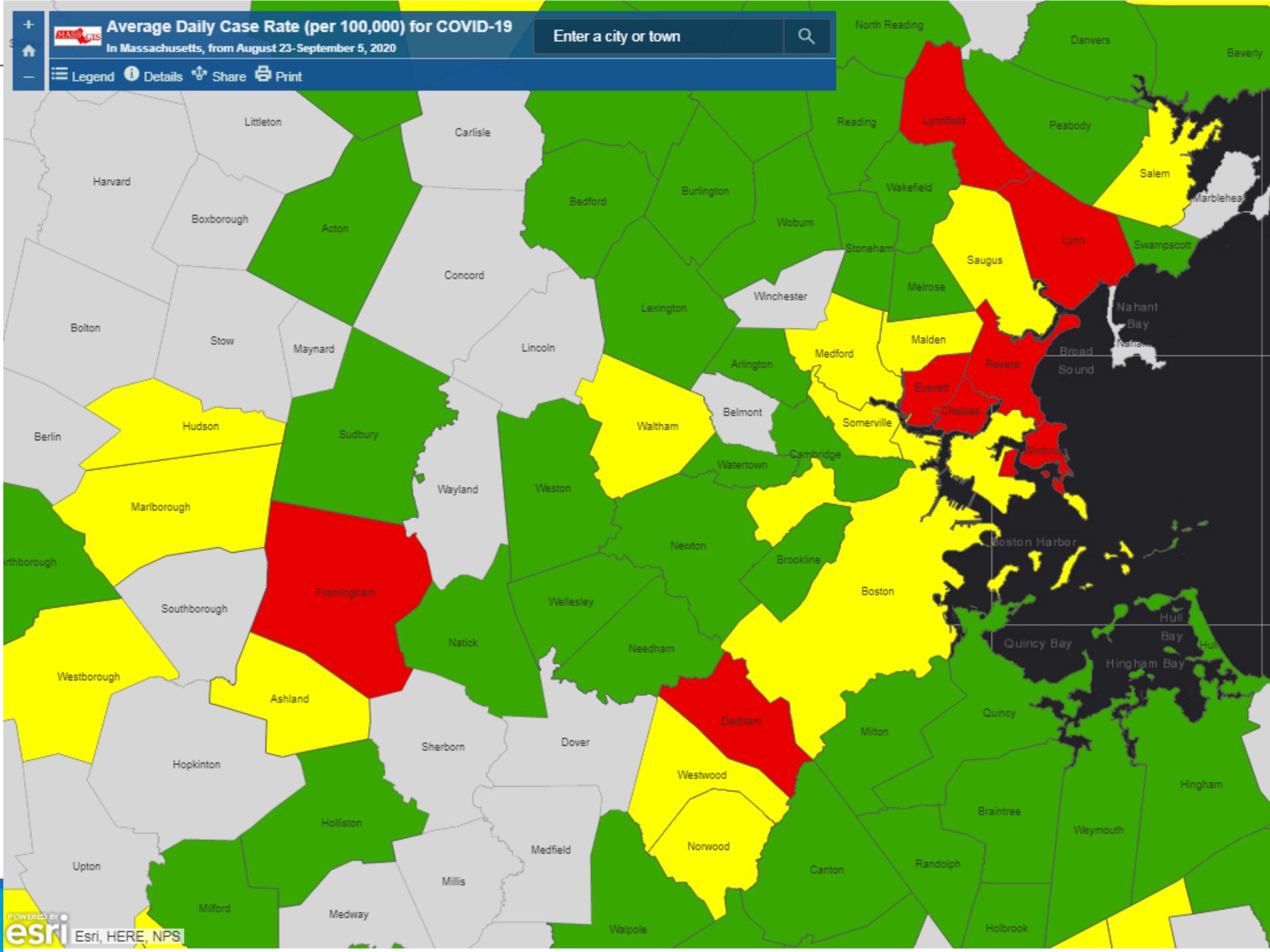
Total Tests: 46,594

Total Tests Last 14 Days: 16,636

Positive Tests Last 14 Days: 27

Percent Positivity: 0.16%

Change In Percent Positivity: Lower



# Prevention

## Public Health Risk Mitigation Pillars

### 1. Face coverings

- Must cover mouth and nose and be made of at least two layers of material and fit securely and comfortably against the side of the face

### 2. Physical distancing: Maintain appropriate distance to prevent exposure

- Stay at least 6 ft. away from others when possible (classrooms will be arranged to maintain distancing)

### 3. Hygiene: Keep hands and the environment clean

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water and use hand sanitizer when soap and water not available
- Students and staff will be encouraged to perform hand hygiene frequently throughout the day

### 4. Avoid exposure to illness: Stay home if sick

- Students and staff who are sick should not attend school in person.
- Staff and families will be provided with a health self-assessment tool they are expected to use every morning before coming into school

## How COVID-19 is spread

The virus is spread largely by person-to-person respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks in close proximity to another person.

Surfaces: This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Although the virus can survive for a short time on some surfaces and can be spread from touching surfaces then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes, this is unlikely.

## COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Prompt case investigation and contact tracing help control the spread of COVID-19.

The local health department is automatically notified when a resident tests positive for COVID-19.

That notification triggers a case investigation and contact tracing then to determine who they may have had close contact with during their infectious period (2 days before symptom onset or specimen collection date if asymptomatic).

Those identified as close contacts are then contacted and provided with instructions on proper quarantine procedures and support.

## Definition of a close contact

Someone who has been less than 6 ft. from a confirmed COVID-19 case for at least 10-15 min. during the case's infectious period (starts 2 days before symptom onset, or specimen collection date for cases who are asymptomatic) and ends when the case has been released from isolation by a public health authority.

# Testing

Testing provides vital information regarding the health status of people who may be infected with COVID-19 and helps restrict the potential spread of the virus. This is an important tool, especially coupled with the other tools of quarantine, isolation, and the public health risk mitigation pillars referenced earlier.

Newton is following MDPH and CDC guidelines and recommending COVID-19 testing in scenarios when an individual is symptomatic with relevant symptoms or when an individual has been identified as a close contact of a positive individual.

# Surveillance Testing

**Surveillance testing-** The universal, routine testing of all members of a community.

The CDC, MDPH and DESE are all in agreement that surveillance testing is not essential for the operation of schools at this time in Massachusetts. While surveillance testing is an important tool in fighting this pandemic, it is only one of many methods to reduce risk.

NPS is implementing proven strategies to minimize the potential for viral transmission in the school setting that include but are not limited to:

- Physical distancing of 6 ft.
- Mandatory face coverings
- Hand washing & sanitizing
- Maximization of fresh air exchange in buildings

## How to get tested

If you have symptoms or are an identified close contact, you should reach out to your health care provider for guidance. It is always important to be in contact with your own physician whenever possible so that the medical advice you receive is specifically tailored to your health profile.

Most doctors will be able to order a test when one is required. Your doctor will be able to support you through your results and advise you on follow-up care.

MDPH also has an interactive map on their website that lists all the testing sites available nearby, many of which people can access on their own if they prefer. Right now these include the free state sponsored sites. [www.mass.gov/gettested](https://www.mass.gov/gettested)

## Safety Net Testing

The City of Newton expects to have an agreement with Newton-Wellesley Hospital (NWH) to support our community members who do not currently have access to COVID-19 testing because they don't have a healthcare provider, are un/underinsured, or have other extenuating circumstances.

For these uniquely vulnerable individuals, HHS will conduct an assessment (including determining whether they are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms or have been in recent close contact to a COVID-19 positive individual) and provide a referral for a test at NWH if all criteria are met.

**\*Please note that access to this safety net testing at NWH is only available with a referral from HHS staff so do not contact the hospital directly.**

## Thresholds for School Closure

The state has established a standard metric for when a community needs to close in-person schooling. The benchmark is that a community who has an average daily case rate of more than 8 cases per 100,000 residents during the prior 14-day period needs to shift to an all remote learning environment. You can find more information about this metric and track Newton's status here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/community-level-covid-19-data-reporting>

Individual Schools, partial schools (classroom(s)), or the whole district will also be assessed for closure if there is evidence of significant viral transmission happening in the school setting.

# COVID-19 Compliance

Concerns are reported to HHS via:

- Online COVID compliance app and/or hotline
- Health general email box
- Direct phone calls and emails

All concerns (complaints, questions, etc.) are triaged and directed to the appropriate division for response

- Example: A question about how to get tested for travel would be answered by a public health nurse
- Example: A concern about a business not following state COVID-19 guidance would be followed up on by one of the environmental health inspectors
- Example: A parent concern about health protocols in school would be responded to by one of the school health nurses.

# Looking ahead through Fall

## Much of our work is COVID-19 related

- Timely response to questions, concerns, inquiries, worries
- Implementing state guidance
- Developing local response to state guidance (documents, plans, etc.)
- Case/contact tracing and monitoring
- Assisting families who have increased support needs (financial, emotional, etc.)

## Continuing regular departmental functions

- Flu vaccine: will continue to provide flu shots to employees, residents, NPS students via primarily drive-thru model. Updates at [www.newtonma.gov/flu](http://www.newtonma.gov/flu)
- Permits, inspections, social services, boards/commissions, etc.

# Thank you!

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Questions?

[Health@newtonma.gov](mailto:Health@newtonma.gov)

Newton Health and Human Services: 617-796-1420