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Face Coverings Required in Norwalk Regardless of Vaccination Status starting at 5 p.m.

Mayor Rilling re-issues mask mandate as COVID-19 cases continue to rise in Norwalk

(Norwalk, Conn.) - Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling announced that effective at 5 p.m. today, December 23, the city of Norwalk will require indoor face coverings for all people, regardless of their vaccination status. The Mayor's [executive order](#) covers all public places and establishments in Norwalk. This order is temporary and is being issued in response to the voluminous and rapid rise of COVID-19 cases in the community and the contagious nature of the Omicron variant that continues to rapidly spread. The mandate will be continually evaluated and reviewed in consultation with the Norwalk Health Department and will remain in effect until transmission rates decrease.

“As the Omicron variant spreads rapidly in Connecticut and across the country, our case rates have increased five-fold in less than a month. Statewide hospitalizations are also at levels we haven’t seen since the beginning of the year. With indoor gatherings planned and holiday travel occurring, it is critically important for people to wear a mask when in public,” Mayor Rilling said. “The health and safety of our residents is always my top priority. Thank you for your cooperation and help as we all must do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19 in our community.”

Over the last month, Norwalk’s average daily case rate per 100,000 population - an important indicator of community transmission - went from 8.2 per 100,000 to approximately 60 per 100,000 population. There have been more than 450 new cases in the last week. In the latest report from the state Department of Public Health (DPH), more than 821 people are hospitalized, and 75% of patients hospitalized are not fully vaccinated. According to the state, those who are unvaccinated have a 5.5 times greater risk of getting COVID-19 and a 20 times greater risk of dying from the virus compared to those fully vaccinated.

With the current level and continuing increase of COVID-19 cases, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DPH both recommend facemasks be worn in indoor public settings regardless of vaccination status. The growing presence of the Omicron variant in Connecticut, surrounding states, country, and world emphasizes the need for everyone to continue to practice common sense prevention measures such as wearing facemasks to protect themselves and others. [Facemasks work to protect you in two ways](#): by reducing the viral contamination in the air exhaled from an infected person and to protect an uninfected person from exposure by filtering the air that one inhales. Different types of facemasks exist, and each provide varying levels of protection. At minimum, [the CDC recommends](#) that facemasks cover one’s face and nose via a snug fit without any air gaps and, to maximize effectiveness, that the mask remain clean and dry. If a mask is made of cloth, two or more layers is better than one. Cloth, surgical, KN95, and N95 masks generally provide increasing protection in that order. Masks can be layered if one can safely breathe without difficulty.

“Wearing a mask in public and getting vaccinated or boosted are the most effective ways to protect yourself and your family and to slow the spread of the virus within our community,” said Norwalk Health Director Deanna D’Amore.

The latest information regarding COVID-19, including testing locations and vaccine clinics, can be found at norwalkct.org/citynews.

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