

# **New Bedford residents encouraged to stock up on FREE COVID-19 test kits as holiday season begins**

“Building on the successful prior rounds of test kit distribution, the City of New Bedford is continuing to make available free, at-home COVID-19 test kits at public libraries across the city.

The free distribution coincides with the start of the holiday season and the approach of potential increases in COVID-19 cases. Test kits are available at New Bedford public libraries as part of the current (fourth) round of free test distribution over the past year.

Beginning in December 2021, the City has distributed nearly 72,000 kits (each containing two tests) through community partners, including 12,100 testing kits from the city’s public libraries.

Parents with vulnerable children are encouraged to obtain kits even if there is no immediate exposure risk or active case in their household. Likewise, even as overall COVID-19 transmission levels remain modest, small business owners (provided they are residents) may wish to consider obtaining kits to help protect vulnerable employees in the event of a future workplace exposure.

## **LIBRARY HOURS:**

Free COVID-19 at-home test kits are available at all public library branches. Locations and hours are as follows:

**Main Library, 613 Pleasant St.**

(508) 991-6275

*Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.*

*Friday & Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

**Casa Da Saudade Branch, 58 Crapo St.**

(508) 991-6218

*Tuesday – Thursday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

**Wilks Branch, 1911 Acushnet Ave.**

(508) 991-6214

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

*Tuesday & Thursday: 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.*

**Lawler Branch, 745 Rockdale Ave.**

(508) 991-6216

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

*Tuesday & Thursday: 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.*

**Howland-Green Branch, 3 Rodney French Blvd.**

(508) 991-6212

*Monday, Wednesday, Friday, & Saturday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.*

*Tuesday & Thursday: 12 p.m. – 8 p.m.*

**BACKGROUND ON TEST KITS:**

Residents use the tests at home. Test results are available in minutes and samples do not need to go to a laboratory. People do not need a cell phone or computer for any part of the test. The tests are effective for all individuals 2 years of age and up, regardless of vaccination status or whether they have symptoms.

Residents are advised to take note of expiration date information on test kit boxes. Each test kit box has a sticker on the front with a Quick Response (QR) Code that can be scanned to view the tests' expiration date online. Earlier this summer, the FDA extended the shelf life of all iHealth tests by 3 months. Learn more: <https://ihealthlabs.com/pages/news>

If you test negative, continue to monitor yourself for indications of infection. If you develop symptoms or existing symptoms worsen, take another home test or seek a PCR test at a testing location:  
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-covid-19-test>

If you test positive, consider confirming your result with a PCR test at a testing location (see link above), isolate consistent with CDC guidelines, and notify any close contacts who may have been exposed to COVID-19. Learn more:  
[mass.gov/COVIDtreatment](https://www.mass.gov/COVIDtreatment)

For more information on at-home tests, visit:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html/>

View COVID-19 information and indicators on the City's website: [www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/coronavirus/](http://www.newbedford-ma.gov/health-department/coronavirus/)