

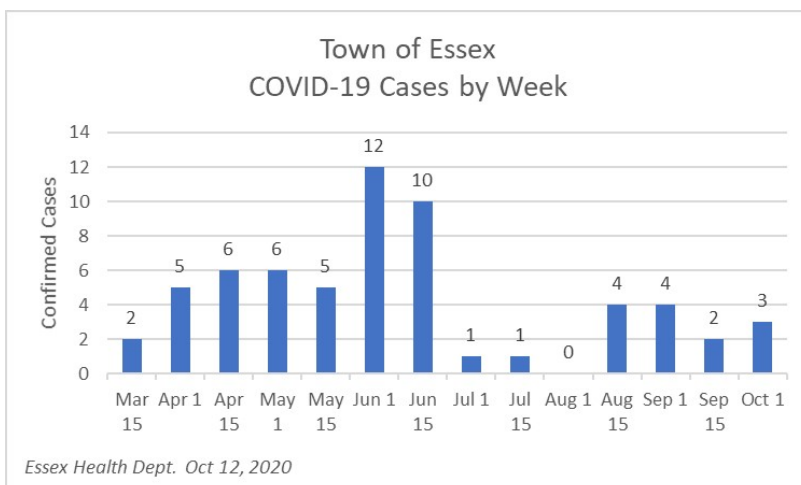
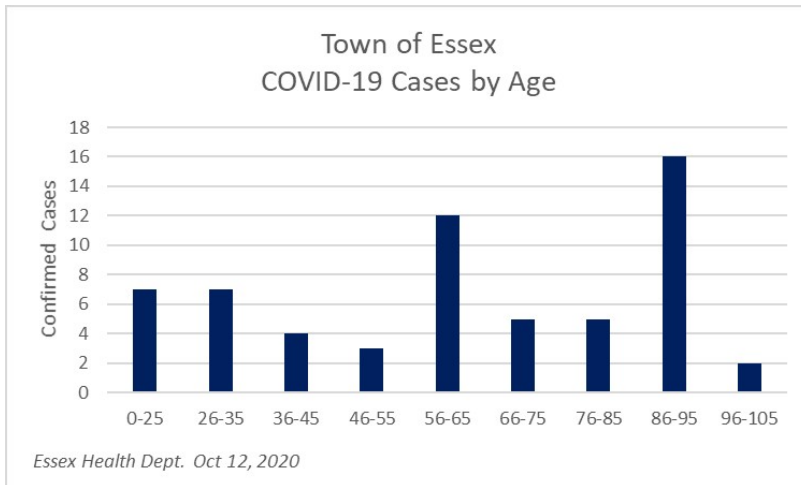


COVID-19 Update from the Essex Health Dept.

The Town of Essex has had 61 confirmed cases of COVID-19 since March 2020. A spike in number of new cases was observed back in June when point prevalence testing in a congregate setting was conducted. Modifications in infection prevention procedures and policies at the facility have stopped viral transmission.

The number of new COVID-19 cases in our community is beginning to rise. This is not unexpected given that cooler weather entices people to hold indoor gatherings. Small and medium-sized gatherings where friends and families do not wear masks and do not maintain adequate distance greatly increases the risk of viral transmission.

[Town Website](#)



workplaces which brings more people closer together indoors for extended periods of time. Phase 3 Rules continue to require masks which completely cover the nose and mouth to be worn and 6ft social distancing to be maintained. Refer to www.ct.gov/coronavirus for Phase 3 Reopen Sector Rules.

This week, schools transitioned from a hybrid learning model (students attend school in-person 2-days per week and online 3-days per week) to a more traditional learning model (students attend school in-person every day). The option for full day online (remote) instruction continues to be available as well. Refer to www.ct.gov/SDE/COVID19 for School Reopening Guidance.

It is important to note that viral transmission does not appear to be occurring during the course of the school day. State Department of Public Health (DPH) and Department of Education (SDE) report that Schools' implementation of strict policies, practices and cleaning standards reduce risk of infection by students and staff. Across the State, it has recently been reported that most of the confirmed COVID-19 cases associated with schools are attributed to students' and staff participation in extra-curricular activities, private and travel sporting tournaments, small group gatherings and family parties where strict adherence to social distancing and mask wearing is decreased. For this reason, Public Health Officials continue to remind and strongly encourage everyone to wear masks, maintain a minimum of 6ft social distance, wash hands and commonly touched surfaces frequently, and most importantly, stay home if you feel unwell.

Contact Tracing:

Essex Health Director continues to do Contact Tracing on confirmed cases of COVID-19 and people who are identified as close contacts of that person. It is essential that Contact Tracing be initiated as soon as possible to minimize transmission of virus to others in our community. When you are tested for COVID-19, the test results are reported by your physician or the testing laboratory to the State Dept of Public Health who then notifies the Local Health Dept of your test result.

***** If you or a family member tests positive for COVID-19 or if you are a contact of a person who tested positive, please call the Essex Health Dept (860-767-4340 x118) as soon as possible so that Contact Tracing can begin immediately. Time is of the essence during a viral pandemic and our community cannot afford to wait several days for a physician or**

the State Health Dept. to notify the Essex Health Dept of a positive test result ***

The purpose of contact tracing is to quickly identify and isolate a person who has COVID-19 and to identify and quarantine all close contacts of the person who has COVID-19. The intent is to break the cycle of viral transmission by separating people with known illness (cases) and those with potential illness (close contacts) from all others and to prevent spread of disease to members of the immediate household and broader community. The first step of contact tracing is to quickly communicate with the confirmed case and provide accurate information on isolation, testing, and essential resources to assist in their recovery. The second step of contact tracing is to identify all close contacts of that case, to notify them of their potential exposure to the SARS-COV2 virus, and to provide accurate information on quarantine, testing, and access to local resources. The third step on contact tracing is to enroll all cases and close contacts into the Connecticut Contact Tracing Platform called ContaCT for daily monitoring of symptoms and to facilitate and address any unmet needs. The Essex Health Director provides ongoing guidance during and after isolation or quarantine or to any resident who has questions about COVID-19.

COVID-19 Test Methods: PCR vs Antigen Test

The only way to confirm if you have COVID-19 illness is to test for it. There are two main types of tests for SARS-CoV-2: a PCR test and an Antigen (Ag) test. Both can be done by a "nasal" swab and both are advertised as a rapid test. However, each test method provides different decision-making information.

1. **PCR Test** (often called a molecular test or nucleic acid test) - this is the "Gold Standard" for confirming SARS-CoV-2 infection. A positive result by PCR test confirms that a person has COVID-19. A negative result confirms the person does not have COVID-19. The PCR test has both specificity and sensitivity to the SARS-Cov-2 virus but may take 1-3 days for the result to be reported.
2. **Antigen (Ag) Test** - this is a quick test for detecting *any* type of coronavirus infection and is not specific for detecting novel SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19 illness. Detection is generally less sensitive than the PCR test. The Antigen test is best used for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 illness or for people who are known close contacts of someone who has COVID-19. A positive result by Antigen test method generally confirms that a person

has COVID-19 and the result is classified as a *probable case*; a confirmative test by PCR is warranted. A negative test result by Antigen test method is inconclusive and a confirmative test result by PCR should be considered. Updated information regarding Antigen testing is forthcoming from CT Department of Public Health.

What to do if you have COVID-19 or are a Close Contact of someone with COVID-19:

If you test positive for COVID-19:

1. Take it seriously. Write down all the places you've been in the prior 5 days - work, school, religious services, retail stores, restaurants/coffee shops, doctor appointments, fitness centers, large or small gatherings, sporting events, book club and poker games, etc. Next write down who you may have been in close contact with for 15 minutes or more (with or without wearing a mask). Think about carpools, coworkers, classmates, teammates, family, friends, fellow parishioners, fantasy football leagues, etc. Be honest about all your close contacts.
2. Call the Local Health Dept in the town where you reside. If you live in Essex, call the Essex Health Dept. 860-767-4340 x118 to report your diagnosis. If you work in Essex or attend Region 4 Schools, your employer or school nurse should also notify the Essex Health Dept. so that contact tracing can begin.
3. Discuss your list of close contacts with the Health Dept. Together we will identify those who are most at risk of contracting the virus. Again, be honest.
4. You must isolate from all others for at least 10 days from symptom onset or from 2 days before the positive test result. The Health Dept will provide additional information and describe the rationale for the 10-day timeline. Isolation means you must stay home, and limit all contact with others including immediate household members. The purpose of isolation is to stop the cycle of transmission. Regardless of whether you are symptomatic or asymptomatic, the 10-day isolation is a critical step in preventing viral spread to others. Isolation means: **no** going to work, school, restaurants, social gatherings, sporting events/team practices, religious services, a friend's house, wedding/special occasions/party, or any other place where you could transmit virus to

others. The Health Dept will provide information about when it is OK to return to your normal daily activities.

If you are a close contact of someone who tests positive:

1. Take it seriously but don't panic. Just because you are identified as a close contact, does not automatically mean you will become ill. Get a COVID-19 test.
2. You may be notified by the person who tested positive for COVID-19, an employer, or by the Health Dept of your potential exposure to someone who has tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus. If you believe you are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, contact your Local Health Dept to discuss this. You will likely be asked to get a COVID-19 test.
3. You must quarantine for a minimum of 14 days from the date of your last exposure to the person who tested positive for COVID-19. The Health Dept will provide additional information and describe the rationale for the 14-day timeline. Quarantine means you must stay home, and limit all contact with others including immediate household members. The purpose of quarantine is to prevent you from unknowingly shedding virus and infecting anyone else if you become ill. Regardless of whether you are symptomatic or asymptomatic, the 14-day quarantine is a critical step in preventing viral spread to others. Quarantine means: **no** going to work, school, restaurants, social gatherings, sporting events/team practices, religious services, a friend's house, wedding/special occasions/party, or any other place where you could potentially and unknowingly transmit virus to others. The Health Dept will provide information about when it is OK to return to your normal daily activities.

For the most up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19, visit ct.gov/coronavirus. You can also subscribe to text message alerts from the state by texting the keyword **COVIDCT** to **888-777**.

For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 and where to get a COVID-19 test, visit <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Health-and-Safety> or call 2-1-1

LATEST COVID-19 FACTS

- [Get the Latest Guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 Testing Sites Locator](#)
- [COVID-19 Self Checker](#)
- [Center for Disease Control](#)
- [State of CT Coronavirus Information](#)
- [Governor Lamont Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Emergency Orders Issued by Governor Lamont](#)

Or call the 2-1-1 Connecticut Hotline

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Town of Essex