

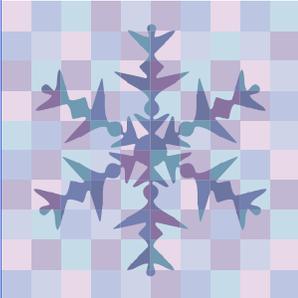
Come warm up with the

Breathe easy

at home program

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Special points of

Interest:

- Enterovirus D68 Advisory
- Flu Season Preparations
- Breathe Easy Technology
- Heating Season
- Winter Mold Prevention

Health Advisory: Enterovirus D68

Recently, hospitals in a number of states report seeing an unusually high number of children with severe respiratory illness caused by enterovirus D68 (EV-68). This virus appears to be spread through close contact with infected people, most likely when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or when an uninfected person touches contaminated surfaces. EV-68 has been associated almost exclusively with respiratory disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is working with multiple states, including New York and Connecticut, to track

respiratory illnesses to determine if they were caused by EV-D68.

The first laboratory confirmed EV-68 case was reported by a Boston hospital on September 22. This patient was hospitalized for symptoms consistent with respiratory illness and has since been discharged. BPHC is working with schools, early childcare programs and other groups throughout Boston, providing guidance on prevention of respiratory illnesses, including EV-68. Influenza vaccination is recommended.

For questions related to *EV-D68*, please contact: Boston Public Health Commission Infectious Disease Bureau ~ (617) 534-5611 For questions related to *asthma*, please contact:

Boston Public Health Commission Asthma Prevention & Control Program ~ (617) 534-5966

For fact sheets and up-to-date information, see the Boston Public Health Commission's [Health Advisory](#) webpage.

Preparation for Flu Season

In preparation for flu season in Boston, typically October through March, everyone six months and older should receive a flu vaccine every year. Flu vaccines may be available through your health care provider, a pharmacy, or at a public flu clinic.

[Click here](#) to find a pharmacy in your neighborhood that offers flu vaccine (pharmacists in Massachusetts can only

vaccinate those who are 18 years old and older). Please call ahead to confirm availability. If you need help with insurance or finding a health care provider, or if you have questions about flu clinics, call the [Mayor's Health Line](#) at 617-534-5050 or toll-free at 800-847-0710.

If you have questions about the flu or flu vaccines, call the Infectious Disease Bureau at 617-534-5611. Calls are free and confidential. For fact sheets and resources, you can visit the Boston Public Health Commission's [Infectious Disease page](#).



New Technology for Breathe Easy

In accordance with our evaluation grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Breathe Easy at Home recently applied the Failure Modes & Effects Analysis (FMEA) model to assess program function and promote systems improvement.

Findings from the process are all aimed at increasing completed referrals and include a need for referring provider and patient/tenant education about Breathe Easy at Home as well as about

the Inspectional Services Housing Division. Some system changes we are exploring include changing the contact protocols of ISD to referred patients, changing the BEAH website to allow better contact for scheduling, and to add prompts for referring providers to screen asthma patients for housing triggers.

Improvement plans revolve around reviewing and updating all BEAH outreach materials, developing a

training video for referring providers, a complete overhaul and reconfiguration of the BEAH website and referral system, and a pilot of an inspection reminder system for all BEAH referrals.

Of course, these changes and upgrades will be made gradually and we will keep you informed as things progress!

Heating Season in Boston

No one should be left out in the cold. Despite recent reductions in some energy prices, many people still need help to get through the cold season. The City of Boston is here to help you find out where you can turn for fuel assistance. Please see the city's [website](#) for information about discounted utility rates, city and state programs, home improvement services, and other forms of assistance. Residents can always call the Mayor's Hotline at 617-635-4500, 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week.

The State Sanitary Code requires that residential property owners provide functioning heating systems that are capable of heating habitable spaces to minimum temperatures of 68° daytime (7AM-11PM) or 64° nighttime (11:01PM-6:59AM).

Alert landlords first to

Functioning heating systems are required and must heat habitable spaces to minimum temperatures of 68° daytime (7AM-11PM) or 64° nighttime (11:01PM-6:59AM).

correct "no heat" or insufficient heat problems. If they do not respond, please call the Inspectional Services Department at 617-635-

5300 during normal business hours 8AM-4PM Monday-Friday. After hours, you can contact the 24-Hour "No Heat" response team via the Mayor's Hotline at 617-635-4500.

Mold Prevention for Winter

Pollen this time of year is not a threat to indoor environments for people with asthma. However, weather changes in colder months can increase the likelihood of mold growth in homes. The amount of moisture or water vapor in the air depends on the temperature in the air in and outside of the home. During the winter, condensation is more likely to be present especially in older homes because for the most part windows are closed and often they lack mechanical ventilation systems to remove moisture. In addition, older homes are less likely to be insulated compared to newer homes and when warm air in the home comes into contact with cold surfaces, such as walls and window sills, mold growth increases.

Steps to control moisture and mold in homes:

- Insulate living spaces and windows
- Vent all home appliances such as clothes dryers and stove to the outside
- Clean exhaust fans to make sure they work properly
- Repair leaky plumbing, roof, gutters, flashing, siding and downspouts
- Repair and report mold problems immediately
- Make sure rain water drains away from the foundation
- Do not live in basements or rooms without windows
- Avoid using humidifiers
- Cover pots and pans when cooking
- Wipe shower walls after showering and leave the bathroom door open
- Open blinds and shutters on cold days or raise blinds 2 inches above the window sill to increase air circulation.

Small areas with mold/mildew can be cleaned with vinegar and water. Visible mold growth is a violation of the State Sanitary Code for Housing. Notify your landlord if you see mold. If the problem is not resolved, bring it to the attention of the city's Inspectional Services Department. To make a complaint, call 617-635-5300.