

Respiratory Virus Guidelines – March 2024

In the last several years, we have all adopted a few basic behaviors and precautions to protect our health, that of our families and others we encounter through the day. Frequent hand washing and not sharing personal items are examples of precautions that help reduce the spread of respiratory virus and infectious diseases including COVID-19 and its variants, flu, RSV, and other illnesses. In addition to encouraging preventive behaviors, we strongly encourage all Girl Scout members (both girl and adult), as they are able, to be fully vaccinated and boosted against respiratory viruses and infectious diseases. This will provide the greatest degree of protection and allow the most flexibility in planning and enjoying Girl Scout activities.

Some of our sister Girl Scouts or someone in their family may be at high risk for serious disease. Out of respect for their health and comfort level, and to allow inclusion in Girl Scout activities, we support troop or service unit leadership teams in establishing greater protection than GSCWM requires. We also trust their judgment to determine if greater protection is advised due to local conditions or the nature of a particular activity.

The following guidelines are based on current guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), recommendations from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, local boards of health, and GSUSA resources. Please continue to check the GSCWM website (www.gscwm.org) for the most current health & safety updates and don't hesitate to contact us at info@gscwm.org if you have questions.

GUIDELINES

- Every participant in a Girl Scout meeting or activity should do a quick health check before they leave home and not attend if they are showing any signs of illness.
- While masks are no longer required, we remain mask friendly. Any participant is encouraged to wear a mask if they are more comfortable doing so or if their parent/guardian instructs them to do so.
- Girl Scout groups must comply with the requirements of the meeting or

activity location.

- Maintain comfortable distancing and good ventilation - spread out, go outdoors, open windows and doors, open tent flaps whenever possible.
- **Frequently wash hands** with soap and water, especially before eating, after using the restroom, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Have hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol and not containing methanol) available.
- Personal items (hair ties, brushes, towels, etc.) and drink containers must not be shared.
- **Returning to Girl Scout activities following a respiratory viral infection**
 - The infected individual may participate when the following have been met:
 - ✓ No fever for at least 24 hours - without the use of fever reducing medication **AND**
 - ✓ Respiratory symptoms have improved
 - ✓ Masks should be worn for five days following the relief of fever and symptoms