

Philadelphia Weekly PHP Outreach Newsletter

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

The Latest Events

- Cases of flu increasing
 - The CDC's latest FluView report states:
 - Early increases in seasonal influenza activity continue nationwide.
 - The southeastern and south-central areas of the country are reporting the highest levels of activity followed by the Mid-Atlantic and south-central West Coast regions.
 - Read the full report here: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>
 - Get your questions about the flu answered in the FAQ below.
- **Recording of the Fall Public Health Preparedness Virtual Event**
 - Breathe into Fall: Staying Healthy and Prepared During the Fall Season
 - Learn about respiratory health, seasonal flu, COVID-19, and available resources to keep you healthy this fall.
 - Recordings available in English, ASL, Spanish, Mandarin and Vietnamese.
 - Visit: <https://bit.ly/Fall2022PHPworkshop>
 - Interested in PDPH offering a similar workshop for your group?
 - Email us at publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov to discuss.
- **Anyone at risk can now get a Monkeypox vaccine**
 - On November 4, 2022, PDPH issued a [health update](#) stating any patient who feels they are at risk for coming into contact with Monkeypox can now be vaccinated.
 - They do not need to meet any further eligibility criteria.
 - Outreach will continue to prioritize those who are most at risk, including gay, bisexual, transgender, other men who have sex with men, or non-binary persons.
 - Read the PDPH Health Update [here](#) and the PDPH blog post [here](#)
- **PDPH launches new COVID-19 data dashboard**
 - The new data dashboard still includes a breakdown of vaccine by gender, race/ethnicity and age, but also allows you to see all data by either monovalent or bivalent dose.
 - The new dashboard is available at: <https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxDashboard>
- **Help spread the word about Paxlovid to protect older adults from the worst of COVID-19**
 - Older adults are some of the most vulnerable to getting severely sick with COVID-19 if they become infected.
 - Paxlovid is a medication that greatly reduces the worst COVID-19 effects for older adults, but not enough older adults know about it.
 - Help spread the word and encourage the older adults in your life to ask their healthcare provider if Paxlovid is an option for them.
 - Find out more in the FAQ below and here: <https://bit.ly/PaxlovidPHL>
- **Updated, bivalent booster available for everyone 5 and older**
 - As the weather gets colder and more people are socializing inside, it is very important to make sure everyone eligible, including children, gets the latest COVID-19 booster.
 - This will help people build back protection that has gotten weaker over time from their previous vaccines.

- This booster is updated to include protection from the current versions of the COVID-19 virus that are currently circulating.
 - The current versions of the virus are more easily passed from person to person.
- Information on the new authorization is available at <https://bit.ly/5plusUpdatedVax>.
- **Job Opening: Recovery Specialist in Public Health Preparedness Program**
 - The Public Health Preparedness program helps communities prepare for and respond to public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and write this weekly newsletter.
 - The Recovery Specialist will assist the Recovery Planner to analyze responses to public health emergencies, identify areas for improvement, and develop and implement policies and procedures to support recovery from public health emergencies.
 - This position will be working with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that all perspectives are represented.
 - The position requires a Bachelor's degree or better and would be contracted by PHMC.
 - Find the full job description at: <https://bit.ly/RecoverySpecialistPHP>
 - Feel free to spread the word to anyone you think would be qualified and interested.
- **Special Initiatives Application Extended: Resiliency in Communities after Stress and Trauma Philadelphia (ReCAST)**
 - The mission of Philadelphia ReCAST is to promote resilience and equity, improve behavioral health, and reduce trauma through a sustained community change process.
 - Application deadline extended to January 15, 2023, or until all available funding has been allocated. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
 - More information is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PhilaReCAST>.

FAQ on the Seasonal Flu

- **Can the flu vaccine cause the flu?**
 - No, it is not possible for the flu vaccine to give you the flu.
 - If you get symptoms of the flu after your vaccine, these could be common side effects such as a headache, fever, nausea or muscle aches and should only last 1-2 days.
 - If you get sick with the flu soon after you got your flu vaccine, this is because you were exposed to the flu virus recently and the vaccine didn't have enough time to protect you from getting sick, this time.
 - There are two types of flu vaccines, one made with "inactivated" or killed virus and one made with "weakened" or live flu virus.
 - Both types build protection against the flu virus, but the vaccines are made in a way that they are not able to infect you with the flu virus.
- **Why do some people get side effects from the vaccine?**
 - Everyone's immune system is unique to them, so some people will get normal side effects from the flu vaccine, and some won't have any side effects.
 - In both cases, your body is building protection against the flu virus.
- **You can still get the flu even after getting the flu vaccine, so what's the point in getting vaccinated?**
 - Each year the flu vaccine is updated to protect against the types of flu virus expected to be the most common that year. However, several types of flu virus are circulating all the time. This is why people may still get the flu even though they got vaccinated.
 - Even though the flu vaccine does not prevent every case of flu, getting a flu vaccine is the best way to lower your chance of serious illness.

- Getting the flu vaccine could also make your illness milder if you do get the flu.
- When more people get the flu vaccine, less flu can spread throughout the community.
- **I am healthy and have never had the flu. Why should I get the flu vaccine?**
 - Even healthy people can get the flu. Most will recover within a few weeks, but some people can develop complications like sinus and ear infections, pneumonia, heart, or brain inflammations.
 - As many as 56,000 deaths occur each year due to influenza.
- **Is it safe for pregnant people to get the flu vaccine?**
 - Pregnant people should especially get the flu vaccine since their immune systems are weaker than usual.
 - A 2018 study showed that getting a flu vaccine lowered a pregnant person's risk of being hospitalized due to flu by 40%.
 - The inactivated flu vaccine is safe at any stage of pregnancy and protects both parent and baby before and after birth.
- **If I don't get my flu vaccine before the winter, is it too late?**
 - Flu viruses usually spread in the fall and winter. Most flu cases happen between December and February. It is still possible to get the flu even into the spring.
 - Get your flu vaccine as soon as possible so you can be protected all season long.
- **Where can I get a flu vaccine?**
 - With your primary care provider
 - A health center, pharmacy or urgent care
 - Visit www.vaccines.gov

COVID-19: Resources and Services

- Where to find COVID-19 vaccine, including booster doses:
 - Call 3-1-1 or visit phila.gov/vaccine or vaccines.gov to find a vaccine clinic near you.
 - For interpretation, call 3-1-1, press #5 and say your language.
 - Visit <https://bit.ly/KnowB4Ugo> for updates on transportation, access and functional needs resources, and up-to-date access descriptions of City-run clinics.
 - Options for COVID-19 vaccines for uninsured residents include:
 - Free vaccine at City health centers and pop-up clinics, for insured and uninsured residents. No ID is required at these locations.
 - Other sites, like pharmacies, may bill your insurance company or charge you a direct fee. Call these sites before you go to find out about their policies.
 - More information available at: www.phila.gov/vaccine and bit.ly/COVIDvaxFAQ-PDPH
- Free COVID Testing Kits available for distribution by CBOs
 - PDPH has procured a supply of at-home COVID-9 test kits and will be offering these tests to community-based organizations (CBOs) serving clients and patrons in areas of high COVID-19 risk.
 - Request your free test kits here: <https://bit.ly/CBOtestDistro>
- Free at-home COVID-19 tests for blind/low-vision people
 - If you are blind or have low vision, you can order the more accessible tests online at <https://special.usps.com/testkits/accessible> or by calling 1-800-232-0233.
 - These tests will be available for order until supplies run out.
 - For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/COVIDKitAccess>.
- What to do if you lost your vaccination card?

- Ask your healthcare provider first. If they cannot help, call 215-685-5488 or email COVID@phila.gov to request a copy of your vaccine record.
- The CDC does not provide copies of COVID-19 vaccination cards.
- Stock up on FREE N95 masks
 - Visit <https://bit.ly/FreeN95s> for free masks from the Strategic National Stockpile.
- Stock up on home tests
 - Health insurance companies are required to reimburse 8 at-home tests per month for each person enrolled in the plan and will reimburse up to \$12 per individual test.
 - For more information, visit: <https://go.cms.gov/3Lqo0Yk>.
 - Includes information on how to get tests if you don't have insurance or if you cannot afford to pay for your test up front.

Monkeypox: Resources and Services

- People who are concerned that they've been exposed, or believe they are at high risk of being exposed to monkeypox, should call the PDPH Call Center at 215-685-5488 to see if they are eligible to be vaccinated.
- Find the latest information on cases and vaccine at <https://bit.ly/MPXDashboard>.
 - This is updated every Monday.
 - Find the latest guidance about monkeypox at <https://bit.ly/PHLMonkeypoxInfo>.
 - Find the latest flyers and printable information at <https://bit.ly/PHPGuidance>.
 - Find information on precautions to take while you wait for your Monkeypox vaccine at: <https://bit.ly/MPXvaxWait>.
- If you would like to receive the weekly Monkeypox newsletter update, email publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov.

Public Health Preparedness: Resources and Services

- **Sign up for Ready Philadelphia**
 - To receive free text alerts to your phone on emergencies or severe weather, text "ReadyPhila" to 888-7777.
 - Be the first to know, then spread the word to family and neighbors.
- **Text-to-911 in Philadelphia:** <https://bit.ly/PATextTo911>
 - Individuals who are Deaf, Hard-of-Hearing, and those who face communication barriers may find this service a more accessible means of interface with 911.

More Information

- **PDPH COVID-19 website and social media**
 - Information on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines, and testing resources is available at phila.gov/COVID-19 as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- **PDPH Call Center**
 - Call 215-685-5488. Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.
- **Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline**
 - Call 800-722-7112, Press 9 for interpretation
 - Open 24/7!
 - Talk to a medical professional about COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, vaccine, tests, etc.
 - Get help making decisions about how to keep you, your loved ones, and contacts safe from COVID-19.

How to Stay Connected

- **Join the Community Response Partner Network**
 - This newsletter is sent to the [Community Response Partner Network](#), part of the PDPH Public Health Preparedness Program.
 - Sign up at <https://bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse> to get essential public health information, then pass it on to your family, friends, and community.
- **Questions or suggestions?**
 - Email us at publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov
 - Leave a message with the Public Health Preparedness Program Outreach Team at 215-429-3016.

**Be safe,
Philadelphia Department of Public Health**