

Philadelphia Weekly PHP Outreach Newsletter

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

The Latest News

- **Respiratory viruses are circulating in Philadelphia**
 - This is the season for respiratory viruses, primarily COVID-19, the flu and RSV .
 - It's important to protect yourself and others around you by getting vaccinated, getting tested and staying home when you are sick, masking in crowded public places and washing your hands .
 - More information on COVID-19 and the flu in the FAQ below.
- **New report from the Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Response**
 - At the end of 2022, the White House published a 218-page plan detailing steps to prevent and prepare and invest for the next public health emergency.
 - Read the full report here: https://bit.ly/WhiteHouseCOVID_PHEP
- **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 Similarities and Differences between COVID-19 and the flu

- **What are COVID-19 and the flu?**
 - Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses.
 - COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) first identified in 2019.
 - Flu is caused by infection with a flu virus. There are a number of types of flu viruses.
- **Which virus spreads more easily?**
 - From what we know, COVID-19 spreads more easily than flu.
 - This is why it is so important that everyone stay up to date with the latest COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Many people still have not gotten the updated bivalent booster and will not be fully protected through this cold season.

- The more people who are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines the lowest the risk of severe COVID-19 illness and death.
- **Which virus is more severe?**
 - Compared with flu, COVID-19 can cause more severe illness in some people.
 - Compared to people with flu, people infected with COVID-19 may take longer to show symptoms and may be contagious and pass the illness to others for longer periods of time.
- **How can I tell the difference between the flu and COVID-19?**
 - You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19 just from symptoms, because they have some of the same signs and symptoms.
 - Specific testing is needed to tell what the illness is and to confirm a diagnosis.
 - Having a medical professional give you a test to see if you have the flu or COVID-19 allows you to get diagnosed and treated more quickly.
 - Getting treated early for COVID-19 and flu can reduce your risk of getting very sick.
 - Testing can also reveal if someone has both flu and COVID-19 at the same time, although this is uncommon.
 - People with flu and COVID-19 at the same time can have more severe disease than people with either flu or COVID-19 alone.
- **What are the symptoms of COVID-19 and the flu?**
 - Both COVID-19 and flu can have varying degrees of symptoms, ranging from no symptoms to severe symptoms.
 - Common symptoms that COVID-19 and flu share include:
 - Fever or feeling feverish/having chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue (tiredness)
 - Sore throat
 - Runny or stuffy nose
 - Muscle pain or body aches
 - Headache
 - Vomiting
 - Diarrhea (more frequent in children with flu, but can occur in any age with COVID-19)
 - Change in or loss of taste or smell (this is more frequent with COVID-19)
- **How can I prevent myself from getting COVID-19 or the flu?**
 - Get your seasonal flu vaccine and the updated, bivalent COVID-19 booster
 - Wear a mask inside crowded public spaces
 - Wash your hands often
 - Avoid touching your face
 - Cough and sneeze into the back of your elbow or a tissue
- **For more information, visit:** <https://bit.ly/COVIDvsFluCDC>

More Information

- **PDPH COVID-19 website and social media**
 - Information on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines and testing resources: phila.gov/COVID, facebook.com/phillyhealth and [twitter@PHLPublicHealth](https://twitter.com/PHLPublicHealth).

- **PDPH Seasonal Flu website**
 - Information on the seasonal flu and how to get vaccinated: <https://bit.ly/FluPHL>
- **PDPH Mpox website**
 - Information on the latest updates, information on vaccine and testing and the data dashboard: <https://www.phila.gov/monkeypox>
- **PDPH Call Center**
 - Call 215-685-5488. Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

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>
- **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.

Mpox: Resources and Services

- People who are concerned that they've been exposed, or believe they are at high risk of being exposed to mpox, 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>.
- If you would like to receive the monthly mpox 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.

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