Public Health Preparedness Newsletter

FALL 2023

Department of Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

This newsletter is available in Amharic, Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese at bit.ly/CRPNnewsletter.

To request free printed copies, visit: bit.ly/PHPMaterials or leave a message at 215-429-3016.

Prepare for Cold and Flu Season

Prevent Illness

To protect from COVID-19, the flu or other respiratory viruses:

- Get vaccinated.
- Wear a mask inside crowded public spaces.
- Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Feeling Sick?

Take a rapid COVID-19 test.

Contact your healthcare provider with any questions about your health or how to protect people around you.

- **See page 4** for information to find a healthcare provider that you trust.

Most people can treat themselves at home

- Rest—Give your body a chance to fight the infection.
- Hydrate—Drink lots of water, juice, tea and soup. Avoid sugary drinks.
- Medicate—Over the counter medications can help with some symptoms.

COVID-19 Vaccine, Masks and Tests

The end of the COVID-19 public health emergency declarations changed some Medicaid, SNAP and other COVID services. For the latest information, visit bit.ly/PHEendPHL.

- Find FREE COVID-19 vaccine: phila.gov/vaccine, vaccines.gov

- Find FREE COVID-19 tests: bit.ly/COVIDResourceHubs
   ◊ You will not be asked for ID or insurance.

- Every month, community groups can get 100 FREE tests and masks to give away: bit.ly/COVIDTestKitRequest

- Every U.S. household is eligible to order 4 free at-home COVID-19 test kits: www.covidtest.gov

Questions? Contact the PDPH call center at 215-685-5488
(Press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.)

Read on for information about how to protect you and your loved ones from COVID-19, seasonal fu and RSV.

Respiratory viruses	Mental health
Prevention/Symptoms	Utility assistance
Testing	and more!

The Big 3 Respiratory Viruses

SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), Influenza (flu), and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

Who do we need to worry about ?

Some people are more likely to get severely sick if they get COVID-19, RSV or the flu:

- Adults aged 65 and older.
- Infants and young children.
- People with some medical conditions.
- People who are pregnant.

How are viruses spread?

- Tiny droplets of water containing a virus can leave a person's body when they cough, sneeze, or breathe out.
- These droplets might enter the eyes, nose, or mouth of someone nearby and they can become infected.
- People can also touch something with virus on it and then can transfer the germ to themselves.

FLU, COVID-19, and RSV

These three viruses affect your lungs and breathing and, like all viruses, are expected to mutate or change over time. This is why updated vaccines are important.

FLU	- There are two main types of flu virus: influenza A and influenza B. - It is expected that different strains or types of influenza A and influenza B are common each year.
COVID-19	- COVID-19 is caused by the 2019 coronavirus, known as SARS-CoV-2. - It is expected that different strains or types of COVID-19 will develop as the virus changes over time.
RSV	- Respiratory syncytial (sin-SISH-uhl) virus, or RSV, is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. - Vaccine is available for infants and a new vaccine is now available this season for eligible adults over the age of 60.

Symptoms

All three respiratory viruses share similar symptoms like **body aches, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, fever, headache, runny or stuffy nose, and sore throat.**

You cannot tell if you have the flu or COVID-19 just from symptoms. Testing is needed to tell if someone has the flu, COVID-19 or possibly, both.

- Get **FREE** COVID-19 tests, even if you do not have insurance at:
  https://bit.ly/PHLTestingSites
- **See page 4** for information to find a healthcare provider that you trust.

Vaccination is the Best *Protection*

Vaccines are the safest way to build immunity from a virus.
Find a vaccine clinic near you: phila.gov/vaccine, vaccines.gov.
Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions about these vaccines.

Flu Vaccine

- The flu vaccine is updated every year to protect against the strains of flu expected to be the most common or dangerous. Visit bit.ly/FluPHL for more information.
- Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year.

COVID-19 Vaccine

- As the COVID-19 virus changes, new vaccines are developed to protect against new strains of COVID-19.
- Those 6 months and older should get the updated COVID-19 vaccine. Visit www.phila.gov/COVID for more information.

RSV Vaccine

Older Adults - Adults 60 years of age and older may receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.

Pregnant People - Pregnant people may receive a single dose of maternal RSV vaccine during weeks 32-36 of pregnancy.

Infants - Infants may be given an RSV protection during their first RSV season. Visit www.CDC.gov/RSV for more information.

Bridge Access Program
FREE COVID-19 Vaccine

The Bridge Access Program provides **FREE COVID-19 vaccines** to adults aged 18 and older without health insurance and adults whose insurance does not cover all COVID-19 vaccine costs. The Bridge Access Program will continue through December 2024.

Here is a current list of some Bridge Access Program providers. This list will keep growing, so for the most up-to-date list, please visit: https://bit.ly/FreeCOVIDVaccine.

- CVS and Walgreens – Various locations
- Stephen Klein Wellness Center – 2144 Cecil B. Moore Ave., 19121
- ASHE – 2001 W. Lehigh Ave., 19132
- Esperanza Health Center Allegheny – 861 E. Allegheny Ave., 19134
- Broad and Snyder Pharmacy – 2108 S. Broad St. 19145
- Spectrum Cottman Avenue Health Center (CAHC) – 3525 Cottman Ave., 9149
- Philadelphia FIGHT – 1207 Chestnut St. 19107
- GPHA—Chinatown Medical Services—432 N. 6th St., 19123
- **And more! Visit https://bit.ly/FreeCOVIDVaccine for the latest list.**

Mental Health Resource Corner

Need support with a mental health crisis? Call 215-685-6440.
Mental Health & Addiction Services: 888-545-2600.
Open 24/7, Interpretation available, Reach out anytime.
Free, online screening and free resources at HealthyMindsPhilly.org

Frequently Ask Questions

Why do viruses mutate (change)?

- Viruses need to make copies of themselves to survive.
- Sometimes these copies have tiny mutations or changes that make the virus more or less serious for humans.

Will the flu or COVID-19 or RSV vaccine make me sick?

- No, none of the respiratory viruses vaccines contain live virus. You cannot get the flu, COVID-19, or RSV from these vaccines.
- Many people experience side effects such as fever, muscle aches and fatigue after these vaccines. These symptoms typically last about 24 hours or less.

Why do some people still get sick after being fully vaccinated?

- Although no vaccine is 100% effective against illness, getting vaccinated against the Flu, COVID-19, and RSV significantly reduces your chance of being hospitalized or dying from the disease.
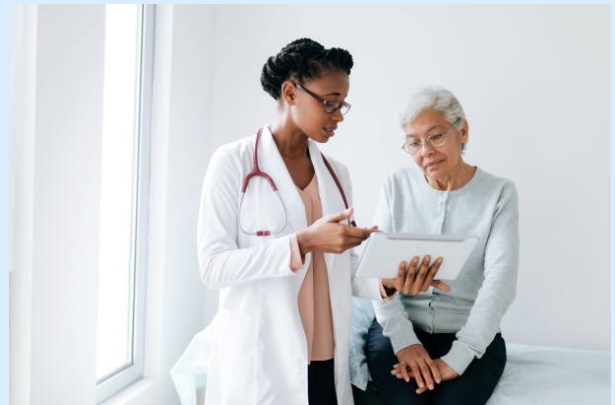
Find a Healthcare Provider

It is important to have a primary care provider that you trust to answer your questions and help you stay healthy. It is always OK to switch providers to find the right one for you.

Use the Primary Care Finder: www.phila.gov/primary-care to find free or low-cost medical care.

- Search by language, location, specialty and more.

Let's stay connected!

Visit our website at bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach.

For printed copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation, or interested in an info desk or presentation for your community email us at PublicHealthPreparedness@phila.gov or leave a message at 215-429-3016.

We would love to hear from you!

Sign up for the **Community Response Partner Network (CRPN)** at: bit.ly/phlcommunityresponse.

Get essential public health information to share with family, friends, and neighbors.

CRPN