

Philadelphia Biweekly PHP Outreach Newsletter

Philadelphia Department of Public Health

The Latest Events

- The Holiday Season is here! If you're gathering with vulnerable family members, remember: They're still at risk of getting sick and so are you.
 - Quick tips
 - Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face and cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing.
 - Stay home if you feel sick.
 - Disinfect frequently touched surfaces to prevent the spread of viruses and bacteria.
 - Improve air quality when indoors by turning on your HVAC system fan to “on” instead of “auto”, use a HEPA filter or fans, or crack open a window.
 - Remember that the fall and winter season is also respiratory virus season!
 - Getting vaccinated against COVID, flu, and RSV is the best way to not get severely sick from these viruses or pass them on to others.
 - Learn more about how to keep your holiday gatherings safe in the FAQ below.
 - For more information, please check out the attached flyer and share with your networks!
- December is “Hi Neighbor” Month
 - Neighbors can be an important source of assistance in the days after an emergency.
 - Because they live close, neighbors might be your first and best option for help during a power outage, flood, or extreme heat event.
 - To learn more about neighborhood preparedness, visit: <https://bit.ly/3uGb3Gy>

The Latest News

- Get free at-home COVID-19 tests:
 - Every U.S. household is eligible to order 4 more free at-home COVID-19 test kits.
 - Order your free at-home tests here: https://bit.ly/Covid19_test
 - Need help placing your order?
 - Call (800) 232-0233. For TTY, call (888) 720-7489
 - Resource Hubs (2 per household member): <https://bit.ly/ResourceHubsPHL>
 - No insurance or ID are required.
 - Test2treat.com (6 total tests): <https://bit.ly/HomeT2T>
 - Those with commercial insurance are not eligible.
- Fall preparedness materials available:
 - Our new Fall Newsletter and flyers about RSV, COVID-19 and the flu are available.
 - To order free printed copies, visit: <https://bit.ly/PHPMaterials>
 - Translations available.
- Do you have diarrhea?
 - It could be caused by a bacteria called Shigella.
 - An increase in Shigella has been seen in Philadelphia
 - Shigella spreads very easily from one person to another.
 - To learn how to protect yourself and your community, go to: <https://bit.ly/ShigellaInfo>

- New suite of health promotion materials for people with disabilities
 - CDC created tailored health promotion messages and materials to improve hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, mask wearing, and physical distancing behaviors among people with hearing, vision, cognitive, mobility, and/or self-care disabilities.
 - To access and download materials, go to: <https://bit.ly/CDCHealthPromo>
- Resource webpage for people with disabilities
 - CDC's Respiratory Virus Resources for People with Disabilities is a web page promoting resources about how to prevent flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) for people with disabilities.
 - To find resources that can help people with disabilities, go to: <https://bit.ly/RespVirusResources>
- Access to free COVID vaccine for uninsured and underinsured Philadelphians
 - The COVID vaccine is the best way to prevent yourself from getting COVID or from getting so sick with COVID that you need to go to the hospital.
 - The Bridge Access Program covers the COVID-19 vaccine for people who don't have insurance, or if their insurance won't cover the vaccine.
 - Find Bridge Access Program providers here: <https://bit.ly/FreeCOVIDVaccine>
 - Keep an eye on this page as new providers are added.

Frequently Asked Questions on How to Stay Safe through Holiday Gatherings

- Why do I need to take extra care of my health during the holidays?
 - Many different viruses spread more during fall and winter, including those that cause flu, COVID-19, and RSV.
 - Large gatherings, crowded travel, and more time indoors can mean more viruses spreading around during the holidays.
- What is the best protection for myself and other people I will be celebrating with?
 - Get the updated vaccine.
 - Getting vaccinated can protect you from getting severe disease and help keep your illness mild if you do get sick.
 - Get vaccinated as soon as possible or at least 2 weeks before your next celebration.
 - If you have been recently sick with COVID-19, you can consider waiting 3 months before getting your vaccine.
 - To learn more about flu vaccines, visit <https://bit.ly/FluPHL>.
 - To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines, visit <https://bit.ly/COVIDvaxPHL>.
 - Test for your guests.
 - Taking a COVID test on the day of your gathering can help everyone get rid of some COVID anxiety and help keep people safe.
 - Test before and after travel.
 - If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and have no symptoms:
 - Test on days 5, 7, and 9 after your last exposure.
 - If you have symptoms:
 - Test immediately and again 2 days later.
 - Even if you don't have COVID, you probably have another respiratory illness.
 - It's best to avoid being around loved ones until you feel better, so you don't get them sick.
 - If you don't have a stockpile yet, get some now to be prepared.
 - Visit https://bit.ly/Covid19_test

- Host outdoors if possible
 - If outside won't work for your gathering, ventilate your space by cracking windows and/or using a HEPA filter, or turning on your HVAC unit to "on" instead of "auto", or using fans.
- Wear a mask
 - Wear a mask during gatherings to help prevent spread of respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, flu, and RSV.
- What are some things I should know before spending time with friends and family during the holidays?
 - Be mindful that you may not know everyone's health status or who they may be sharing a space with.
 - They may be the primary caregiver for someone who is ill, or they may have an essential job and can't miss work if they get sick.
 - People with a weakened immune system can get very sick from COVID, such as being hospitalized or even dying.
 - People can have a weakened immune system because of a medical condition or because they take medications that weaken their immune system.
 - Everyone aged 6 months and older should get an updated vaccine, but for vaccination is especially important for those with weakened immune systems.
- What do I do if I feel sick on the day of the event or gathering?
 - If you're sick, stay home!
 - Take a COVID-19 test. If you test positive, or have COVID-like symptoms, you should stay home to avoid getting anyone else sick.
 - If you have COVID-19 symptoms: Test immediately and isolate until you get your result. If negative, test again 2 days later.
 - Symptoms include: Fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, or body aches.
 - Visit the CDC's isolation calculator for guidelines on isolating: <https://bit.ly/COVIDisolationCDC>
- Where can I get more information?
 - Check out the attached flyer on Winter Safety and share with your networks!

COVID-19 Information

- Want to offer FREE COVID-19 vaccines to eligible adults at your community event
 - eTrueNorth can help you identify a pharmacy partner to provide vaccine services.
 - Flyer is attached; please share with your networks!
- It's fall and that means it's vaccination season
 - The best way to protect you and your family from getting seriously ill is to make sure everyone stays up to date with vaccines.
 - To find out which vaccines you need to schedule for yourself and your loved ones, go to <https://bit.ly/FallVax>
- COVID-19 test kit distribution program
 - Community-based organizations, event organizers, and venues can apply to receive free at-home test kits and face masks to share with their communities and event attendees.
 - For more information go to <https://bit.ly/TestKitDistrib>

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.

PDPH Information

- **PDPH COVID-19 website and social media**
 - Information on the ending of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency declarations: <https://bit.ly/PHEendPHL>
 - Latest information from PDPH : phila.gov/COVID, facebook.com/phillyhealth and [twitter](https://twitter.com)
- **PDPH Call Center**
 - Information on City public health guidance, services, resources, and more.
 - Call 215-685-5488, press 3 for interpretation in your language, press 2 for Spanish. Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

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.