

PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS NEWSLETTER

FALL 2024

This newsletter was created by the Preparedness Program with the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. We help residents prepare for public health emergencies, such as extreme weather, disease outbreaks, severe storms and other emergencies.

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

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

Prepare for Respiratory Virus Season

Core prevention strategies



Immunizations



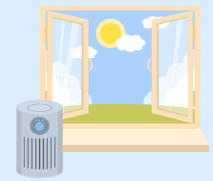
Hygiene



Treatment



Stay Home and Prevent Spread



Steps for Cleaner Air

Additional prevention strategies



Masks



Distancing



Tests

Use additional prevention strategies when:

- ✓ Many people in your community are getting sick with respiratory viruses.
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness.
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering.

Did you know...

- Of all people who get severely sick and are hospitalized for COVID-19 in the U.S.
 - 95% are **not up to date on their vaccines**
 - 70% are **50 and older**
- **We must all practice prevention measures to keep ourselves, our loved ones, and our community safe!**

Read on for information about how to protect yourself and your loved ones this season.

- Respiratory Health Guidance Page 2
- Vaccines Page 3
- Utility Assistance Page 4
- Primary Health Care and Mental Health Resources Page 4

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR COVID, FLU AND RSV

IF YOU ARE SICK, STAY AWAY FROM OTHERS

If you have risk factors for severe illness from respiratory viruses and are sick or exposed, seek health care promptly for **testing** and **treatment**.

You can return to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall **AND**
- You are fever-free without fever reducing medicine

When you return to your normal activities, take **added precautions for the next 5 days**. The more precautions you follow, the better.

IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO A RESPIRATORY VIRUS

Monitor your symptoms and take **added precautions for 1-2 weeks**. In case you did get the virus, this will help reduce the risk of getting anyone else sick.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR A RESPIRATORY VIRUS BUT DON'T HAVE SYMPTOMS

You may be contagious. For the **next 5 days, take added precautions**.

RESPIRATORY VIRUS SYMPTOMS:

Fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.

PEOPLE WITH RISK FACTORS FOR SEVERE ILLNESS INCLUDE:

- Older adults
- Young children under 5
- People with weakened immune systems
- People with disabilities
- Pregnant people
- People with certain health conditions

ADDED PRECAUTIONS:

- Take steps for **cleaner air**. Open windows, turn on fans, use central A/C or HEPA filters, or gather outdoors.
- Practice **good hygiene**. Cover your coughs and sneezes, wash or sanitize your hands often, clean frequently touched surfaces.
- **Mask** when around others.
- **Physically distance** from people with risk factors for severe illness.
- **Test** before meeting others indoor, especially if they have risk factors.
 - You cannot tell if you have the flu, COVID-19 or RSV just from symptoms. Testing is needed to tell which virus you have and what treatment may be best.
 - Take a test at home or get tested by your healthcare provider.
 - See page 4 for help finding a provider.
 - Get FREE COVID-19 tests, even if you do not have insurance at: bit.ly/COVIDResourceHubs.

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.

Flu Vaccine

- The flu vaccine is updated every year to protect against the strains of flu expected to be common or dangerous that year. 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 the virus. Visit www.phila.gov/COVID for more information.
- Everyone 6 months and older should get the updated COVID-19 vaccine.

RSV Immunization

Visit www.CDC.gov/RSV for more information.

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

Infants - Infants may be given RSV protection during their first RSV season.

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

Frequently Asked Questions

How do 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.

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.
- It is expected that viruses will mutate or change.

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

- No, none of the respiratory virus 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 and can prevent you from passing the disease on to other people.

Find a Health Provider

It is important to have a primary care provider you trust to help you stay healthy through the fall season, especially if you have a chronic health condition.

Use the **Primary Care Finder** at www.phila.gov/primary-care to find free or low-cost medical care, even if you do not have insurance.

Search by language, location, specialty and more.



Ask the Health Department

For more information or if you have any questions, call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at **(215) 685-5488**.

For interpretation, **press 2** for Spanish; **press 3** for interpretation in your language. **Dial 711** for **TRS/TTY assistance**.

Mental Health Resources

Need support for overall mental health or for a mental health crisis?

Call **(215) 685-6440**.

For Mental Health and Addiction Services, call **(888) 545-2600**.

- Both hotlines are **open 24/7**.
- **Interpretation is available**.

Free online screening and resources at HealthyMindsPhilly.org.

Stay Connected to Utility Services

A safe home and uninterrupted utility service are essential for physical and mental health.

Utility Emergency Services Fund

Call **(215) 814-6835** or visit uesfacts.org.

- Support to enroll in state and federal benefits, utility and housing assistance, case management, financial assistance, educational workshops and more.

BenePhilly

Call **(844) 848-4376** or visit bit.ly/BenePhilly.

- Non-income-based resources and one-on-one support to help residents enroll in benefits to afford cost such as:

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|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>Prescription Drugs</i> | <i>Heat & Other Utilities</i> |
| <i>Health Insurance</i> | <i>Property Taxes</i> |
| <i>Groceries or Childcare</i> | <i>Disability Benefits</i> |

Let's stay connected

The Public Health Preparedness Program helps communities prepare for and respond to public health emergencies through community trainings, resource tables, and door-to-door canvassing.

Visit our website at bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach.

For printed copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation, 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.