

Public Health Preparedness Respiratory Health Newsletter 2026



Department of
Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

About This Newsletter

This newsletter was created by the Public Health Preparedness Program to prepare residents for public health emergencies such as infectious disease outbreaks, severe storms, and more, during the fall 2026 season.

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

Request free printed copies.



bit.ly/PHPMaterials



Leave a message at 215-683-0806.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Respiratory illness
information.

Health and vaccine
guidance.

Information on measles.

Resources for accessing
healthcare.

Sign Up for ReadyPhiladelphia!

The Office of Emergency Management shares information about emergencies and severe weather through free email and text alerts using the City's mass notification system, ReadyPhiladelphia.

Alerts are available in **eleven languages**: English, French, Arabic, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Swahili, and American Sign Language.

For free text alerts, please text **READYPHILA** to **888-777** or sign up at bit.ly/ReadyPhila.



Prepare for Respiratory Virus Season

Respiratory Illnesses

Respiratory illnesses can be caused by viruses that affect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs.

Who is at risk of serious illness?

- Adults aged 65 and older
- Babies and children under 5 years old
- People with weakened immune systems
- People with some disabilities
- People with certain chronic health conditions
- Pregnant people

Symptoms of respiratory viruses can include:

- Fever, chills, cough, runny nose, headache, fatigue, and more.

If you develop symptoms, use the below core strategies to protect those around you.

Seek medical attention or call 9-1-1 if you have:

- Trouble breathing, chest pain, dizziness, confusion, seizures, high fever, or a fever or cough that improves but returns or gets worse.

How Respiratory Viruses Spread

- Respiratory viruses spread through the air when an infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks and someone breathes in particles of the virus from that person.
- Viruses can also spread when you touch objects or surfaces with particles of the virus and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Viruses can spread before an infected person begins to have symptoms.

Viruses tend to spread more in the fall and winter because:

- More people are gathering indoors due to cold weather.
- Travel and gatherings for the holidays.
- The colder, drier air helps some viruses spread more easily.

Core strategies to prevent illness



Immunizations



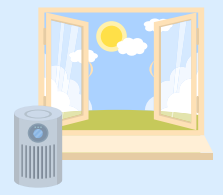
Hygiene



Treatment



Stay Home and Prevent Spread



Steps for Cleaner Air

Additional strategies to prevent illness



Masks



Tests

Use additional strategies when:

- ✓ Many people in your community are getting sick or are not vaccinated.
- ✓ You were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering.
- ✓ You, or those around you, are at risk of serious illness.

A close-up photograph of a child's arm, showing a yellow bandage on the elbow and a red string tied around the wrist. The child is wearing a light blue shirt.

Health and Vaccine Guidance

Vaccination is the best **protection**.

Vaccines are the safest way to build immunity from a virus and lower your chance of serious illness.

Talk to your healthcare provider about the vaccines you need this season.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine

- The flu vaccine is updated every year to protect against the strains of flu expected to be most common.
- Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year.
- Learn more at www.phila.gov/flu-shot.

COVID-19 Vaccine

- Everyone 6 months and older is eligible for an updated COVID-19 vaccine.
- It is especially important for a person to get a COVID-19 vaccination if they are:
 - Ages 65 and older
 - Pregnant, postpartum or lactating
 - At high risk for severe COVID-19 or in close contact with someone at high risk for severe COVID-19
 - Ages 6-23 months old or have never been vaccinated against COVID-19
- Learn more at www.phila.gov/COVID.

RSV Immunization

- All adults 75 years and older as well as adults 50 years and older who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease should receive a single dose of RSV vaccine.
- Infants less than 8 months whose birthing parent did not receive RSV vaccination should receive a RSV immunization in their first RSV season.
- Pregnant people can get vaccinated to prevent severe illness in their infants.
- Learn more at cdc.gov/rsv.

Where to Get Vaccines

If you have insurance:

- Make an appointment with your doctor or at your local pharmacy.
- Find a primary care provider at phila.gov/primary-care.

If you do not have insurance or are under-insured:

- Contact a local health center.
- Visit, bit.ly/CityHealthCenters, for hours and locations.

These clinics provide vaccines for everyone. Proof of Philadelphia residency is required. Call ahead to ensure they have the vaccine you need!

Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Community-based Flu Campaign (CFC)

CFC helps bring influenza vaccination directly into the community.

- Community partners can receive influenza vaccines to host special clinics for uninsured adults ages 19 and older who are residents of Philadelphia.

If you are a community partner and are interested, please reach out to Nichole.J.Taylor@phila.gov for more information and the registration form.

Visit bit.ly/CFCVaccineProgram for more information.

Protect Your Health

Measles

Measles is highly contagious and spreads easily through the air, with greater risk of serious illness and hospitalization for babies, young children, pregnant people, and those with weakened immune systems.

Protect from illness

The MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine is the best way to prevent measles.

You're protected if you've been vaccinated, had measles, or have lab-confirmed immunity.

Traveling soon? If you're not protected and plan to visit an area in the U.S. with a measles outbreak or travel abroad, get vaccinated at least 2 weeks before travel.

- Infants 6-11 months should receive an early first dose of MMR vaccine. Everyone 12 months and older should get 2 doses of vaccine.

Know the symptoms

Symptoms usually appear 7-14 days after exposure and develop in stages:

- Early signs of measles are high fever, cough, runny nose, and red, watery eyes.
- Later symptoms (2-5 days after early symptoms) can include a high fever, tiny white spots inside the mouth, and a red rash that starts on the face and moves down the body to the feet.

You can get a free MMR vaccine at Philadelphia City health centers. Call 215-685-2933 for an appointment.

Talk to your doctor to confirm you or your child are protected. Learn more at phila.gov/measles.

Primary Care Finder

Find free or low-cost medical care, even if you do not have insurance.

- Visit phila.gov/primary-care



Scan the QR code
to find a doctor
near you!



Philadelphia Department of Public Health Call Center

Question? Call at **215-685-5488**.

- Press 2 for Spanish.
- Press 3 for interpretation in your language.
- Dial 711 for TRS/TTY assistance.

Stay Connected

Visit our website.

 bit.ly/PDPHPreparednessOutreach

Request a resource table or training.



Contact us for copies of this newsletter, questions, or problems with the translation.

 Publichealthpreparedness@phila.gov

 Leave a message at 215-683-0806.

Sign up for the Community Response Partner Network (CRPN).

 bit.ly/CRPNnewsletters

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

