

## Health Advisory

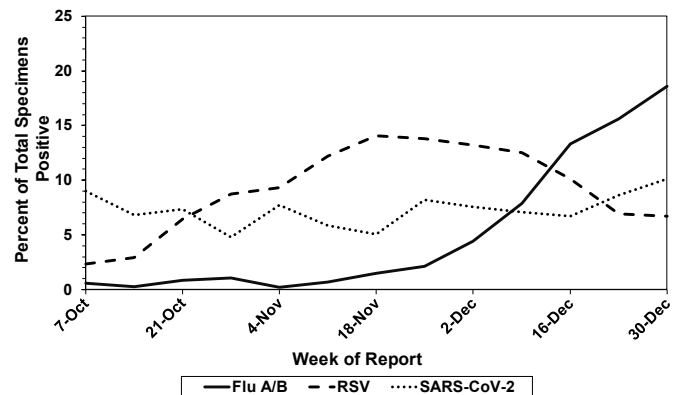
### Respiratory Viruses Circulating at High Levels in Philadelphia January 9, 2024

#### SUMMARY POINTS

- Respiratory viruses are circulating at high levels.
- All eligible individuals should receive their yearly flu vaccine and an updated COVID vaccine for the 2023-2024 season.
- Masking is strongly recommended in healthcare facilities in Philadelphia while there are high rates of respiratory viruses circulating.

#### Laboratory-Based Surveillance for Influenza, RSV, and SARS-CoV-2 (%) Philadelphia, 2023/2024 Season\*

\*Based on select hospital laboratories participating in surveillance across respiratory virus seasons



Based on hospital laboratory and emergency department surveillance data, influenza, and influenza-like illnesses (ILI) have continued to rapidly increase in Philadelphia over the last several weeks. The predominant strain of influenza currently circulating throughout Philadelphia is influenza A though cases of influenza B have been reported at levels exceeding the last three seasons. Influenza diagnoses at Philadelphia emergency departments are approaching the 2022-2023 peak. Rhinoviruses, RSV, adenovirus and metapneumovirus are also circulating, but at lower levels. RSV may have peaked over the last several weeks. COVID hospitalizations and ED visits have rapidly increased over the past month.

#### Vaccination and Treatment of Influenza:

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health Division of Disease Control (DDC) is reminding clinicians to continue to offer influenza vaccination to all patients 6 months and older. Vaccination remains the best form of prevention. Clinicians should also provide antiviral treatment as soon as possible to patients suspected of having or confirmed to have influenza who are:

- Hospitalized
- Have severe, complicated, or progressive illness
- [Are at higher risk for influenza complications.](#)

For most patients for whom treatment is recommended, including hospitalized patients and those with complications or progressive disease, oseltamivir is [recommended](#).

Decisions for treatment of any symptomatic patient should not wait for laboratory confirmation of influenza.

#### Vaccination and Treatment of COVID:

The Philadelphia Department of Public Health recommends vaccination against COVID-19 with one dose of the 2023-2024 updated vaccine for those over 6 months of age. Vaccination is the best way to protect against serious illness from COVID-19 infection. [Recommendations](#) are based on age, brand of vaccine, and timing since last dose if applicable.

For those with mild illness, symptoms can be treated with over-the-counter medications at home. Those at risk for severe illness, [prompt treatment](#) with antivirals such as molnupiravir, remdesivir, or nirmatrelvir/ritonavir, is recommended.

People at risk for severe illness include:

- Adults over the age of 50
- People who are unvaccinated or have not received that 2023-2024 updated vaccine

- People with certain chronic medical conditions such as lung disease, heart disease, or a weakened immune system

**Prevention of RSV:**

- [Healthcare providers should utilize nirsevimab \(Beyfortus\)](#) doses now as RSV is peaking or may have already peaked. There is no longer a need to prioritize or reserve doses.
- Previous guidance to offer nirsevimab to all infants less than 8 months of age and to high risk infants 8-19 months of age should be followed.
- [Continue to offer the RSVpreF vaccine \(Abrysvo\)](#) to all pregnant people at 32-36 weeks gestation through January to protect infant.

**Influenza Reporting:** Severe influenza cases (hospitalizations and fatalities), suspect novel influenza infection, and institutional outbreaks of respiratory illness should be reported to DDC at 215-685-6742. DDC can also assist with coordinating laboratory testing of specimens from suspected novel influenza A patients or specimens found to be influenza A non-subtypeable. For more information including testing algorithms, treatment recommendations, and local activity updates, please visit <https://hip.phila.gov>.

**COVID Reporting:** COVID reporting is unchanged. See [Philadelphia Health Advisory dated June 12, 2023](#) for more information.

**Masking Recommendations:**

Masking is strongly recommended for healthcare workers in all healthcare settings in Philadelphia while respiratory virus activity is high.

Masking is also recommended for patients in outpatient offices, urgent cares, and emergency departments.