

### Common Fall & Winter Respiratory Illnesses

Circulating respiratory viruses such as **COVID-19, influenza (flu)** and **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)** are more common in fall and winter, and can lead to significant illness and disease in the community setting.

**COVID-19, Influenza (Flu)** and **RSV** are each caused by a different virus. They are considered respiratory viruses, as all three spread primarily by droplets produced when someone who is infected or carrying the virus coughs, sneezes or talks, releasing these droplets into the air. People can become sick if these droplets, infected mucus, or saliva enter their body through the eyes, nose or mouth.

Older adults, young children and people with certain underlying medical conditions are at the highest risk of getting sick or having severe illness from these viruses. Here is what you need to know to keep you and your family safe during seasonal respiratory illness season.

### Prevention Tools for Respiratory Viruses

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Vaccines</b><br>Vaccines are the safest way to build immunity from a virus. Vaccines help the body learn how to defend itself from disease without the dangers of an infection. The immunity you gain from vaccination can reduce your risk of infection and becoming very sick if you do get infected.   |   |
| <b>Handwashing &amp; Cleaning</b><br>Handwashing with soap removes most germs, including respiratory viruses, from your hands. If soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can kill these germs. Using household cleaners that contain soap or detergent will remove germs and dirt on surfaces. Daily sanitizing may not be necessary if surfaces and objects are cleaned carefully after use. To sanitize a surface or object, use a weaker bleach solution or an EPA-registered sanitizing spray. | <b>Physical Spacing</b><br>The closer you are to a greater number of people, the more likely you are to be exposed to respiratory virus. Generally, infectious droplets and particles are more concentrated closer to the person who is infected. Stay away from others who are sick if possible, and stay home if you are feeling unwell to prevent spreading illness to others. |
| <b>Masks</b><br>Their effectiveness against different viruses varies, but in general masks can help reduce the amount of germs you breathe in. You can also use masks to help protect others if you have a respiratory virus.  | <b>Air Quality Improvements</b><br>Viral particles in the air spread between people more readily indoors than outdoors. Air quality improvement practices, such as opening windows or using air filters, can reduce the amount of virus you are exposed to.   |

### Immunizations to Protect Against Flu, COVID-19 and RSV

| Vaccine Type                                 | FLU  | COVID-19  | RSV  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Who should receive these vaccines?</b>    | CDC recommends everyone six months and older to get an updated flu vaccine annually. People 65 and older should get a high-dose or adjuvanted flu vaccine, if available. | CDC recommends everyone six months and older should get an updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine. Some groups may receive additional doses to bolster coverage.  | CDC recommends a single dose of any FDA-licensed RSV vaccine for all adults ages 75 and older and adults ages 60-74 at increased risk of severe RSV. |
| <b>What are the benefits of vaccination?</b> | Flu vaccines reduce the risk of flu illness, severe illness, hospitalization, and death.   | COVID-19 vaccines are effective at protecting people from serious illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19; studies are also demonstrating a reduction in the risk of developing long COVID. | Vaccination against RSV can help prevent severe RSV-related illness, hospitalization, and death.   |

\*ask your HealthDirect Pharmacy representative about specific vaccine availability, administering vaccines simultaneously and vaccine supply solutions to keep your patients and residents up to date throughout respiratory illness season.

### 2024-2025 Available Vaccines in the U.S. Market

An individual's medical record and immunization history should be compared to the current CDC Recommended Vaccination Schedule to determine which vaccine(s) are appropriate for the individual at time of encounter or consideration for vaccination.

- [Child and Adolescent Immunization Schedule by Age](#)
- [Adult Immunization Schedule by Age](#)

### Influenza (Flu) Vaccine 2024-2025 [available with HealthDirect Pharmacy Services]

CDC recommends annual administration of updated influenza (flu) vaccines in September-October.

| Approved Ages   | Available 2024-2025 Vaccine Formulation   | Comments   |
|---|---|--|
| <b>≥6 mos</b><br>(IIV3: standard-dose, 15 µg HA per virus component in 0.5 mL; 7.5 µg in 0.25 mL) | 1. Fluzone PFS (Sanofi Pasteur)<br>NDC: 49281-0424-88<br>2. Flucelvax PFS (Seqirus)<br>NDC: 70461-0654-03<br>3. Afluria (Seqirus) MDV<br>NDC: 33332-0124-10 | 1. Either 0.25 or 0.5 mL approved for ages 6-35 months. Egg-based.<br>2. Cell culture-based; ≥6 mos—0.5 mL; Egg-free.<br>3. 6 through 35 mos—0.25 mL; ≥3 yrs—0.5 mL ; jet injector approved for 18-64 years only. Egg-based. |
| <b>≥65 years old</b><br>(HD-IIV3: High-dose, 60 µg hemagglutinin per virus component in 0.5 mL)   | 1. Fluzone High-Dose (Sanofi Pasteur)<br>NDC: 49281-0124-88   | 1. One of 3 options preferred for ≥65 years. Egg-based.  |

For additional information on flu vaccines for the 2024-2025 influenza season, see the ACIP / CDC recommendation summary page available at:

- [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/hcp/acip/?CDC\\_AAref\\_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/summary/summary-recommendations.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/hcp/acip/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/summary/summary-recommendations.htm)

### 2024-2025 COVID-19 Vaccine Approvals & Formulations

| Vaccine Name   | Type            | Approved Age Groups     | Dose / Presentation  |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------|--|
| SPIKEVAX (2024-2025), Moderna                            | mRNA            | FDA Approved ≥12 Years  | 0.5 mL/50 µg; PFS  |
| Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine (2024-2025 Formula)             |                 | EUA 6 months – 11 years | 0.25 mL/25 µg; PFS   |
| COMIRNATY (2024-2025), Pfizer-BioNTech                   |                 | FDA Approved ≥12 Years  | 0.3 mL/30 µg; PFS  |
| Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (2024-2025 Formula)     |                 | EUA 5 years – 11 years  | 0.3 mL/10 µg; SDV - blue cap and blue label                        |
|  |                 | EUA 6 months – 4 years  | 0.3 mL/3 µg; 3-dose MDV with diluent - yellow cap and yellow label |
| Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine, Adjuvanted (2024-2025 Formula) | Protein Subunit | EUA ≥12 Years           | 0.5 mL/5 µg (rS) - 50 µg Matrix-M adjuvant, PFS                    |

For additional information from the CDC on COVID-19 vaccine use in the United States, see their provider recommendation page at the web address below, or scan the below QR code with your smartphone.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html>



### Available 2024-2025 FDA Approved RSV Vaccines for Older Adults 60+

| Vaccine Name  | Manufacturer | Dose & Administration           |
|---------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Arexvy        | GSK          | 0.5 mL, intramuscular injection |
| Abrysvo       | Pfizer       | 0.5 mL, intramuscular injection |
| mResvia (PFS) | Moderna      | 0.5 mL, intramuscular injection |

CDC recommends RSV vaccination in late Summer to Early Fall, before RSV typically starts to spread in the community. Please note, only one dose is recommended by the CDC for coverage at this time.

For additional information, see the CDC webpage on RSV Vaccine Guidance for Older Adults:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/vaccines/older-adults.html>

### Symptoms of Flu, COVID-19 and RSV:

Symptoms of flu and COVID-19 often overlap and include fever, chills, cough, sneezing, runny nose, congestion, fatigue, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, muscle pain, body aches, headaches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Change in or loss of taste or smell may occur with both but is more common with COVID-19 infection.

RSV usually causes mild cold-like symptoms such as cough, sneezing, runny nose, congestion, chills, fever and loss of appetite. RSV infection can lead to significant lower respiratory tract disease, such as bronchiolitis (inflammation of the lung's small airways) and pneumonia.

### Testing For Respiratory Illnesses

If you have symptoms of a respiratory virus, testing can help determine which virus you may have and inform your treatment and general management. Because symptoms overlap, clinical laboratory testing may be required to differentiate flu, COVID-19 and RSV infection. Rapid antigen testing is useful in detecting these viruses, but in general is considered less accurate than laboratory techniques. COVID-19 tests are available over the counter, and for staff; free at-home COVID-19 tests can be obtained from <https://special.usps.com/testkits> starting September 30th, 2024.

It is possible while these viruses are co-circulating to be infected with multiple viruses at the same time.

### Treatment Options:

If you are experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness, contact your doctor or care team to determine testing and treatment options. Prescription antiviral medications for COVID-19 and for flu are available and can lower your risk of developing severe illness, hospitalization, and death if they are started soon after you become infected.

Treatment for RSV is supportive care, as there are currently no FDA approved antiviral treatment options specific to RSV infection at this time.

### Take steps to relieve symptoms

- Manage fever and pain with over-the-counter fever reducers and pain relievers, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. (Never give aspirin to children.)
- Rest and Hydrate. It is important for people with mild illness to rest and drink enough fluids to prevent dehydration (loss of body fluids).
- Remedies are also available over-the counter to manage congestion, sore throat and cough. It is not recommend to take aspirin or salicylate containing products when recovering from flu due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.

### When to seek Medical Care

- You have a fever that is 101 degrees Fahrenheit or higher that persists for more than two days.
- You cough up bloody, brown, or green mucus.
- You experience shortness of breath or severe chest pains.
- You experience a cough that lasts longer than 10 days to 2 weeks.
- You experience persistent pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Development of persistent dizziness, confusion, inability to arouse
- Severe muscle pain, severe weakness or unsteadiness
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

### References:

1. CDC. Protect yourself from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV. Available from < <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/index.html>>
2. CDC. Adult Immunization Schedule by Age. Available from; <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/imz-schedules/adult-age.html>
3. CDC. Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)—United States, 2024-25. Available from; <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/summary/summary-recommendations.htm>
4. CDC. Use of COVID-19 Vaccines in the United States. Available from; <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html>
5. CDC. RSV Vaccines for Older Adults. Available from; <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/vaccines/older-adults.html>