What You Need To Know About
COVID-19, Flu and RSV

Respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) are more common in fall and winter.

COVID-19, flu and RSV are each caused by a different virus. All three spread mainly by droplets produced when someone who is sick coughs, sneezes or talks. People can become sick if these droplets or infected mucus or saliva enter their eyes, nose or mouth.

Older adults, young children and people with certain underlying medical conditions (such as chronic heart or lung disease or diabetes) are at the highest risk of getting very sick or having complications from these viruses. Here is what you need to know to keep you and your family safe.

Symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19, flu and RSV are similar.

- Symptoms may include sore throat, cough, headache, fever, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, and, less commonly, vomiting, diarrhea, and loss of taste or smell. Symptoms are usually mild to moderate but can be serious.
- In young infants, the only symptoms may be irritability, decreased activity, and difficulty feeding or breathing.
- Some people may have no symptoms at all.

Prevention

How can I protect myself, my children and others from COVID-19, flu and RSV?

Get vaccinated! Vaccines reduce your chance of becoming very sick, being hospitalized and dying from these viruses.

Everyone age 6 months and older should get an updated 2024-2025 **COVID-19** vaccine and an updated 2024-2025 **flu** vaccine, even if they have received these vaccines or had these illnesses before.

For **RSV** vaccination:

- **Adults age 75 and older** should get an RSV vaccine.

- **Adults ages 60 to 74** who are at high risk for RSV due to certain medical conditions or residence in a long-term care facility (such as a nursing home) should get an RSV vaccine.
- To protect infants from severe RSV, either the **pregnant person** should get an RSV vaccine or the **infant** should get an injectable medicine to prevent RSV before or during their first RSV season (fall through spring). Some older infants and young children at high risk for severe RSV should also get preventive medicine.
- **People who have received an RSV vaccine before** should not get another RSV vaccine at this time.

You can get the COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines at the same time.

Talk to your provider to learn more about which vaccines you need or your child needs. To find a **COVID-19** or **flu** vaccination site, visit **vaccinefinder.nyc.gov**. To find an **RSV** vaccination site, visit **nyc.gov/health/map**.

Here are some additional ways to prevent getting and spreading respiratory viruses:

- Wear a well-fitting mask in public indoor spaces and crowded places and when you are sick and unable to separate from others. High-quality masks, such as an N95, a KN95 or a KF94, provide better protection.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue, then wash your hands.

- Avoid close contact with others when sick — stay home from work and keep children who are sick home from day care and school.
- Improve ventilation, such as by opening windows and using a portable air cleaner, or gather outdoors.
- Wash your and your child's hands often; avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth; and clean frequently touched surfaces (such as door and sink handles), especially when you are sick.

Usually, people are more contagious in the first three to five days of illness. If you feel sick or test positive for COVID-19, flu or RSV, stay home until, for at least 24 hours, your symptoms are improving and you have not had a fever without using fever-reducing medicine. After, you can resume usual activities such as work and school but should wear a well-fitting mask for the next five days, as you still may be contagious.

Visit **paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/COVID19** to learn about paid leave if you have or your child has COVID-19.

Getting Care

When and how should I get tested?

If you have symptoms, get tested for COVID-19 and flu right away so you can start treatment if eligible. Many doctors' offices, clinics, urgent care centers and pharmacies can test for COVID-19, flu and RSV at the same time. You can also use at-home COVID-19 tests.

What treatment is available?

COVID-19 and **flu** treatment such as oral antiviral pills reduce the risk of complications, hospitalization and death.

- If you test positive for COVID-19 or flu, contact your provider about treatment right away, as treatment works better the sooner you start.

There is no specific treatment for **RSV**.

Regardless of which virus you have or your child has, talk to your provider about over-the-counter medicine to reduce fever and other symptoms. It is also important to stay hydrated and make sure children who are sick stay hydrated. Most people recover on their own or with over-the-counter medicine.

When should I seek medical care?

Talk to your or your child's provider about whether to seek medical care. Contact your child's provider if your child has:

- Signs of dehydration, such as dry mouth or little urine (less-wet diapers)
- A fever that lasts more than three days or stays above 104 degrees Fahrenheit (40 degrees Celsius), or any fever if they are younger than 3 months old
- Unusual fussiness, poor feeding or sleepiness

If you are unable to reach your provider, go to an urgent care center or emergency room.

For adults or children with difficulty breathing (in young children, this may appear as rapid breathing, grunting, nostrils flaring or using neck muscles to breathe), a pale or blue color around the lips or mouth, confusion, severe dehydration, or other concerning symptoms, call **911** or go to a nearby hospital.

If you or your child does not have a provider:

- Visit a nearby urgent care center or clinic.
- Check with your health plan to see if they have a telehealth hotline.
- Contact NYC Health + Hospitals' Virtual ExpressCare at **expresscare.nyc** or 631-EXP-Care (631-397-2273). Low- to no-cost care is available 24/7 in over 200 languages, regardless of immigration status.
- Find a federal COVID-19 Test to Treat site by visiting **aspr.hhs.gov/testtotreat** or calling 800-232-0233.

For more information, call **311** or visit **nyc.gov/health/coronavirus**, **nyc.gov/flu** and **nyc.gov/rsv**.

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