

UPDATED



Department of
Public Health
CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

RESPIRATORY HEALTH GUIDANCE



This guidance applies to COVID, flu, RSV, and other common respiratory viral illnesses in community settings, including schools and non-healthcare areas of congregate settings.

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 indoors, especially if they have risk factors

STAY UP TO DATE ON YOUR VACCINES!

Updated COVID and flu vaccines are available now for everyone 6 months and older. RSV immunizations are available for infants, pregnant parents, and adults 60 and older.

WHO IS THIS UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR?

This applies to **people in community settings, which includes schools and non-healthcare areas of congregate settings** like residential and retirement communities, shelters, jails and prisons.

The updated guidance **does NOT apply** to healthcare settings or healthcare workers who provide care in congregate settings.



WHY DID THE GUIDANCE CHANGE?

On March 1, 2024, CDC updated COVID-19 guidance to reflect the current state of the disease. Compared to previous years, COVID is now far less likely to cause severe illness due to widespread immunity and improved tools to prevent and treat the disease.

- Over 98% of the U.S. population has immunity from vaccination, prior infection, or both. Vaccines cut the risk of severe disease in half.
- Antiviral treatment with Paxlovid cuts the risk of hospitalization by over half and the risk of death by 75%.
- There are 75% less hospitalizations and 90% less deaths compared to the worst week of the pandemic.
- U.S. states and other countries that shortened isolation times haven't seen an increase in COVID-related hospitalizations or deaths.

However, we must still practice prevention measures to keep us, our loved ones, and our community safe! It's important to remember that:

- Of those hospitalized:
 - 95% are **not up to date on their vaccines**
 - 70% are **50 and older**
- Not enough people with risk factors for severe illness use **antiviral treatment**.

RESOURCES



[CDC's Respiratory
Virus Guidance](#)



[Test-to-Treat
Program](#)



[Get your
Vaccines](#)



[Get Free
COVID Tests](#)

QUESTIONS?

CALL: 215-685-5488 VISIT: PHILA.GOV/COVID

EMAIL: PUBLICHEALTHINFO@PHILA.GOV