



RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES ARE PREVENTABLE

Influenza (the flu), respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), the common cold, and COVID-19 are all respiratory illnesses.

Respiratory illnesses spread from person to person.

When someone who is sick coughs, sneezes, or talks, germs get in the air near them. When this happens, other people can breathe it in and get sick. With some respiratory illnesses, people can also get sick from touching surfaces that have germs on them.

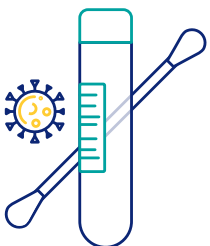
You may be able to spread respiratory illnesses to someone else before you know you are sick, when you are sick with symptoms, and even after you are feeling better.



Respiratory illnesses mostly affect your nose, throat, and lungs.

People with respiratory illnesses might feel:

- + Fever
- + Cough
- + Fatigue (tiredness)
- + Sore throat
- + Runny or stuffy nose
- + Muscle or body aches
- + Headaches
- + Vomiting and diarrhea



Get tested to protect others.

The symptoms of RSV, the flu, the common cold, and COVID-19 are very similar. The only way to know for sure which illness you have is to get tested.

You may be able to get a test at a doctor's office, a community testing site, work, school, or a pharmacy. Some pharmacies sell at-home tests for some respiratory illnesses.



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Stay home if you feel sick.

Staying home from work, school or social events anytime you feel sick is one of the most important things you can do to protect your family, friends and community. Other things you can do include:



Wearing a mask



Covering coughs and sneezes



Washing hands and surfaces frequently



Gathering outdoors if possible and using portable air purifiers indoors



Refraining from the traditional gestures like hugs, handshakes, and cheek kisses can reduce the risk of spreading illnesses.

Some people can get very ill and even die from respiratory illnesses.

Depending on the illness, older people, young children, babies, pregnant people, and people who already have certain health problems are more likely to become seriously ill.

There are vaccines for the flu, RSV, and COVID-19.

Getting vaccinated is the best and safest way to protect yourself, your family and your community from respiratory illnesses.

Vaccines can prevent you from getting sick. Even if you do get sick, vaccines protect you from getting seriously ill.



Vaccines are safe

- + It is safe to be vaccinated against the flu, COVID-19 and RSV all at the same time.
- + Many vaccines are safe and effective for adults, children, and babies as young as 6 months old.
- + The vaccines are also safe for women who are pregnant and breastfeeding.
- + You cannot get a respiratory illness from the RSV, flu, or COVID-19 vaccines.
- + Mild vaccine side effects are normal, and serious side effects are extremely rare.

Continue to get vaccines for the most protection.

The flu and COVID-19 are always changing. To be protected you need to get the flu vaccine every fall, and updated or additional COVID-19 shots depending on your health status. Vaccines are usually free for people with health insurance, including Medicaid.

Additional COVID-19 vaccines become available regularly.

Talk to your doctor about staying up-to-date on your COVID-19 vaccine.