

PRESS RELEASE

Date: October 11, 2023

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Respiratory Virus Season 2023-2024 Explained

Respiratory virus season is here. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), fall and winter are a time when viruses that cause respiratory disease usually circulate more heavily in the community. Many people might call this flu season, but the season now includes the virus COVID-19 in addition to the seasonal flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

All three of those viruses have vaccines available. Vaccinations are the best way to prevent severe disease and protect yourself and others (CDC). Talk to a trusted medical provider about vaccinations. More information is available via www.doh.wa.gov and www.cdc.gov.

This year, The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) has a respiratory illness data dashboard. The dashboard shows disease activity for COVID-19, seasonal influenza, and RSV. The dashboard is available at [Respiratory Illness Data Dashboard | Washington State Department of Health](#).

Surveillance of respiratory illnesses is not new. If you visit DOH [Influenza Surveillance Data | Washington State Department of Health](#) you can review season information from 2009 to the last season summary of 2021-22. There is also a weekly influenza update.

Vaccines are made to fight the specific strains of disease. Seasonal flu, for example, is updated every year. Check out [FDA's Critical Role in Ensuring Supply of Influenza Vaccine | FDA](#) if you want to read more about that process.

The COVID-19 vaccine will also be updated to provide the best protection on an annual basis. To read more about respiratory virus updates, check out [CDC Respiratory Virus Updates | CDC](#). Updated COVID-19 vaccine recommendations are also available at [Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations Now Available | CDC](#).

To prevent certain respiratory viruses, get vaccinated if you can. Additional actions will help you and your family safe including:

- Stay home if you are sick. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Wash your hands regularly.

If you are unsure about the credibility of information, there are websites with guidance listed at [Finding Credible Vaccine Information | CDC](#) or if there is medical terminology you do not know, visit [MLA : For Health Consumers and Patients : What Did My Doctor Say? \(mlanet.org\)](#) for an explanation. “We always encourage individuals to talk to a trusted medical provider if they are uncertain about vaccines,” states Kittitas County Public Health Director Chelsey Loeffers.

If you have any questions about respiratory virus season, call the Kittitas County Public Health Department at (509) 962-7515.

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