

What You Need to Know About Fall and Winter Respiratory Illnesses COVID-19, Flu and RSV

Fall is in the air, which means cough and cold weather viruses are too!

Some of the most common and dangerous viruses this time of year are flu (influenza), COVID-19 and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). The good news is that these illnesses can be prevented by vaccines.

Here is how you can protect yourself and your family from Flu, COVID-19 and RSV this fall:



Wash your hands



Mask in crowded areas



Stay home when sick



Cover your cough



Get the vaccines recommended for you

Please refer to the following immunization information for children and infants, older adults, and the general population:

	INFLUENZA (FLU)	COVID-19	RSV
Infants*	✓	✓	✓**
General Population 2–59 Years	✓	✓	✗
Older Adults (60 and up)	✓	✓	✓

Please Note: It is important to contact your insurance carrier before making any vaccination appointment. Currently, the RSV vaccine requires a prescription from a medical provider.

Please contact your primary care provider or pharmacist with any additional questions about the vaccines.

Vaccine Exchange For Flu or COVID (not RSV)

DC Health connects community groups with vaccine providers. Community groups can learn more at request.vaccineexchange.dc.gov.

Home Vaccination Program

Providers will visit residents who:

1. Have difficulty leaving their home
2. Mostly communicate in languages other than English
3. Have insurance through Medicaid or the Healthcare Alliance

This program can be accessed at 1-855-363-0333.

Additional Information

- ▶ District government agencies and nonprofits can request free COVID-19 tests, free KN95 masks and PPE supplies from the Office of Contracting and Procurement (ocp.dc.gov/page/federal-surplus-property-program).
- ▶ Residents can also purchase KN95 and COVID-19 tests at pharmacies or online.
- ▶ DC Health continues to monitor the spread of these respiratory illnesses in the District and will provide updated guidance as needed.

*Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are for ages six months and up. **The RSV immunization for infants/young children is a monoclonal antibody and is recommended for all infants 8 months and younger, and children up to 18 months with special medical conditions.



My One-Year Vaccination Action Plan

The checked vaccines are recommended for you by your healthcare provider to be given during the next year:

- COVID-19
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
 - 2-dose product
 - 3-dose product
- Human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Influenza
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)

- Meningococcal
 - ACWY
 - B
 - Mpxv
- Pneumococcal disease
 - PCV15 + PPSV23
 - PCV20
 - Polio

- RSV
- Shingles (zoster)
- Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis
 - Td
 - Tdap
- Varicella (chickenpox)
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

PATIENT NAME

DATE

HEALTHCARE PROVIDER NAME

VACCINE ACTION PLAN (to be completed with your healthcare provider or pharmacist)

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER

Instructions and Tips

- Start by writing in the year next to each month. **Start with today's month** and then fill in the rest.
- Fill in any upcoming appointments you already have.
- Add vaccines based on your provider's recommendations.
Note: vaccines may require multiple doses.
- Schedule appointments as needed, and note them in your calendar.
- Remind your health care team to report your vaccinations to your local or state immunization information system (registry).

Sample Scenario for a 52-year-old woman with diabetes.

It is **September 2023** and she needs vaccines for COVID-19, hepatitis B, influenza, and shingles.

JANUARY 2024	FEBRUARY 2024	MARCH 2024	APRIL 2024	MAY 2024	JUNE 2024
2 nd HepB vaccine (pharmacy)	Get 1 st shingles vaccine - 1 st pharmacy				Annual check-up Get 2 nd shingles vaccine
JULY 2024	AUGUST 2024	SEPTEMBER 2023	OCTOBER 2023	NOVEMBER 2023	DECEMBER 2023
		Make vaccine plan!	Get flu and COVID vaccine after mammogram on 21 st		Schedule 1 st HepB vaccine

Vaccine-Preventable Adult Diseases*

COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) can be very contagious and spreads quickly.† COVID-19 most often causes respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, the flu, or pneumonia.

Hepatitis A can cause fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal discomfort, dark urine, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes). An infected person may have no symptoms, mild illness, or severe illness that requires hospitalization. Hepatitis A is often spread through contaminated food.

Hepatitis B is a blood-borne disease that causes a flu-like illness with loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, rashes, joint pain, and jaundice. Hepatitis B can cause severe diseases, including cancer.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is common, especially among young adults and teens, and many people don't know they have it. HPV is the major cause of cervical cancer in women, as well as anal cancer and genital warts in both women and men and other types of cancer.

Influenza can cause a sudden high fever, chills, a dry cough, headache, runny nose, sore throat, and muscle and joint pain. Extreme fatigue can last for days or weeks. Influenza may lead to hospitalization or even death.

Measles is a very contagious respiratory disease. Measles can cause persistent fever, rash, and coughing. Measles can also cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, or death.

Mumps causes fever, headaches, painful swelling of the salivary glands under the jaw, fever, muscle aches, tiredness, and loss of appetite. Mumps can lead to meningitis (infection of the covering of the brain and spinal cord), encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), permanent hearing loss, or swelling of the testes.

Rubella disease usually causes a mild illness with fever, swollen glands, and a rash. It can lead to encephalitis (brain infection) in adults. Rubella during pregnancy can cause miscarriage or serious birth defects.

Meningococcal disease causes bacterial meningitis (infection around the brain and spinal cord). It can cause nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion, and sleepiness. Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections. About one out of every 10 people who get the disease dies from it. Survivors of meningococcal disease may lose their arms or legs, become deaf, have problems with their nervous systems, become developmentally disabled, or suffer seizures or strokes.

Mpox, caused by the Monkeypox virus, can be spread through close, personal, often skin-to-skin contact.‡ Mpox causes a range of symptoms, including a rash and flu-like symptoms, that start within 3 weeks of exposure to the virus.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria and can range from ear and sinus infections to more serious lung and blood infections. In some cases pneumococcal disease can be life-threatening or result in long-term problems, like brain damage, hearing loss, or loss of arms or legs.

Polio is a disabling and life-threatening disease that spreads from person to person.§ Most people who get infected do not have any visible symptoms. Some people will have flu-like symptoms like sore throat, fever, tiredness, nausea, headache, and stomach pain that go away on their own. Some people develop more serious symptoms that can result in meningitis or paralysis.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms that resolve in a week or two. RSV can cause fever, coughing, wheezing, sneezing, runny nose, and a decrease in appetite in both children and adults. Adults usually have mild or no symptoms. Older adults and adults with certain chronic medical conditions are at highest risk of more severe disease, which can lead to hospitalization or death.

Shingles (zoster) is a painful skin rash caused by the same virus that causes chickenpox. A person with shingles will have a rash on one side of the face or body, which blisters and then typically scabs over, then clears up. Other symptoms include fever, headache, chills, and upset stomach. Shingles can affect the eye and cause loss of vision.

Tetanus causes serious, painful spasms and stiffness of all muscles in the body. You can get tetanus from a cut or wound, even a needle prick. Tetanus can cause “locking” of the jaw so a person cannot open his or her mouth, swallow, or breathe.

Pertussis (whooping cough) can cause prolonged cold symptoms, with spells of violent coughing and choking that make it hard to breathe, drink, or eat. Babies too young to get vaccinated are most at risk of severe illness and sometimes death. Babies often get the disease from a parent, caregiver, or relative.

Diphtheria can cause weakness, sore throat, low-grade fever, and swollen glands in the neck. It can also lead to swelling of the heart muscle and, in some cases, heart failure. In severe cases, the illness can cause coma, paralysis, and even death.

Varicella (chickenpox) causes an itchy rash with blisters, tiredness, headache, and fever. It is usually mild but can lead to severe skin infections, pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling), or even death.

For more information about vaccines for adults, visit CDC's website.
www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/vpd.html

* Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine-preventable adult diseases. www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/vpd.html Some of these diseases are prevented by vaccines routinely given in childhood.

† Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About COVID-19. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19.html

‡ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Monkeypox vaccines. www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/vaccines/monkeypox-vaccine.html

§ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What is polio?
www.cdc.gov/polio/what-is-polio/index.htm

