CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Respiratory Illnesses

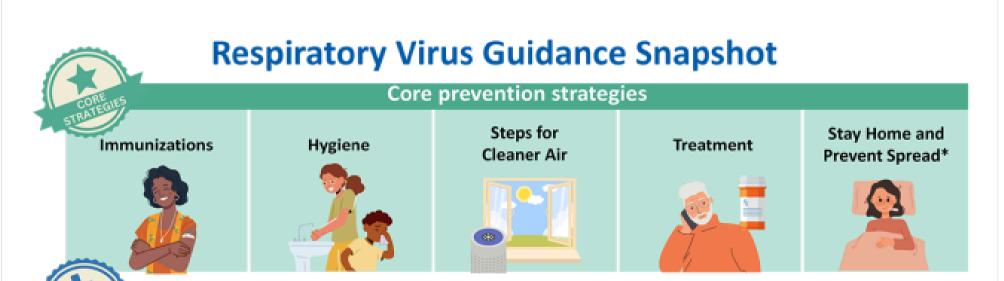Respiratory Illnesses Home

Respiratory Virus Guidance

Each year, respiratory viruses are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States. In addition to the virus that causes COVID-19, there are many other types of respiratory viruses, including flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The good news is there are actions you can take to help protect yourself and others from health risks caused by respiratory viruses.

CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance

This guidance provides practical recommendations and information to help people lower risk from a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

Preventing Respiratory Viruses

- Immunizations for Respiratory Viruses

- Hygiene and Respiratory Virus Prevention

- Taking Steps for Cleaner Air for Respiratory Virus Prevention

- Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick

- Masks and Respiratory Virus Prevention

- Physical Distancing and Respiratory Viruses

- Testing and Respiratory Viruses

Get the Guidance Summary Graphic

Download and share this infographic that summarizes key strategies in the guidance.

Download the Graphic

Special Considerations

In addition to CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidance, there are several special considerations for people with certain risk factors for severe illness.

Risk Factors for Severe Illness from Respiratory Viruses

- Older Adults
- Young Children
- People with Weakened Immune Systems
- People with Disabilities
- Pregnant People

Treatment as Prevention

Treatment is a core prevention strategy to lower risk from respiratory viruses.

Treatment of Respiratory Viruses

About the Guidance

- Background for the Guidance
- Frequently Asked Questions

Note

CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings (COVID-19, flu, and general infection prevention and control). Federal civil rights laws may require reasonable modifications or reasonable accommodations in various circumstances. Nothing in this guidance is intended to detract from or supersede those laws.

Last Reviewed: March 1, 2024