



Protect yourself and others from Flu, RSV, Community-acquired Pneumonia and COVID-19

Currently, various respiratory illnesses are circulating in Georgia, and according to our state epidemiologist, there has been an increase in pneumonia cases, especially among pediatric populations. Recent reports indicate a rise in community-acquired pneumonia, with *Mycoplasma pneumoniae* being the most frequently identified pathogen through lab testing. Pediatric clinicians are reporting significantly higher cases than usual. In response, we are providing the following information about pneumonia, flu, RSV, and preventive measures to protect yourself and others. The CDC and other public health officials strongly encourage everyone to take steps to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Pneumonia (*Mycoplasma pneumoniae*)

Community-acquired pneumonia, also known as "walking pneumonia," is often caused by *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*, which leads to respiratory tract infections. While these infections are generally mild and resemble the common cold, they can escalate to pneumonia. Symptoms, such as fever, chills, cough, headache, sore throat, and nasal congestion, develop gradually and are easy to dismiss. In children, symptoms can include diarrhea, vomiting, and wheezing. Although most cases are not severe, complications like serious pneumonia or asthma exacerbations can occur. Currently, there is no vaccine for *Mycoplasma pneumoniae*.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

RSV is highly contagious and can affect individuals of all ages, though it is most severe in young children and older adults. In healthy children, symptoms often resemble a cold—runny nose, cough, and fever. RSV spreads easily through droplets from sneezing or coughing and contaminated surfaces. Parents should monitor for symptoms that progress to more serious breathing issues and consult their healthcare provider if needed.

Flu and COVID-19

Flu and COVID-19 symptoms can range in intensity and overlap with cold or pneumonia-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, and fatigue. If you suspect you have the flu, COVID-19, or any serious respiratory illness, contact your healthcare provider.

Preventive Measures

To reduce the spread of flu, RSV, pneumonia, and COVID-19, follow these recommended steps:

- **Wash hands** frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Avoid close contact** with sick individuals. If you are sick, minimize contact with others.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue and dispose of tissues immediately.
- **Avoid touching your face**, particularly your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- **Clean and disinfect surfaces** that may be contaminated with viruses.

For the flu and other respiratory viruses, the CDC recommends the following:

- Stay home at least 24 hours after your fever subsides (without fever-reducing medication).
- Everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine.
- Vaccination is particularly important for those at high risk of severe flu complications, including young children, pregnant people, individuals with chronic conditions, and those 65 and older.
- Recommendations for COVID-19 -if you have symptoms, stay home, get tested, and seek treatment if necessary.
- Safe, updated vaccines are available for flu, COVID-19, and RSV for eligible groups.

To ensure the health and safety of students, staff, and parents, we urge everyone to take these precautions. The Office of District Health Services (DHS) works closely with the Fulton County Board of Health to manage and report flu or respiratory illness cases and increased absences. For more information, please contact your healthcare provider or the Fulton County Board of Health at 770-520-7500.

References: The CDC, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, and the Fulton County Board of Health.

More information can be found at the following links:

- [Protect yourself from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV](#)
- [Mycoplasma pneumoniae Information](#)
- Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta - Why Are They Sick: <https://www.choa.org/parent-resources/covid-19/difference-between-flu-covid19-cold-rsv>

If you need this document in another language, email districtlanguageassistance@fultonschools.org or call 470-254-6827.