



COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

Gerardo Pinedo
County Administrator

625 Court Street, Room 202 • Woodland, CA 95695 Madison York, Interim Public Information Officer
www.yolocounty.org Madison.York@yolocounty.org

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Contact: Madison York

Email: Madison.York@yolocounty.org

Protect Yourself from Respiratory Viruses this Winter

(Woodland, CA) – As we enter the winter and holiday season, the Yolo County Health and Human Services Agency urges Yolo County residents to protect themselves and their families against many circulating viruses, including the flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

“We are seeing higher than usual influenza and RSV activity for this time of year,” said Yolo County Health Officer Dr. Aimee Sisson. “We are also seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases. I encourage everybody in Yolo County to take actions to protect themselves and others from what looks to be a rough respiratory virus season ahead by washing their hands often, getting vaccinated and boosted against flu and COVID-19, wearing a mask indoors, covering their cough, and staying home when sick.”

RSV activity is especially high this year, with hospitals across California strained to care for large numbers of ill children. RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in 1-2 weeks without treatment. However, RSV can be serious, especially in infants and older adults, causing pneumonia (lung infection) and bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) in children under 1 year of age.

Respiratory viruses like RSV, influenza virus, SARS-CoV-2 (which causes COVID-19), and viruses that cause the common cold spread through respiratory droplets. Contact with respiratory droplets can occur when an infected person coughs or sneezes and you get droplets in your eyes, nose, or mouth, or when you touch a surface with the virus on it, like a doorknob, and then touch your face before washing your hands. COVID-19 can also be transmitted through smaller particles called aerosols that stay in the air for extended periods of time and travel over long distances before being breathed in.

The symptoms of RSV, influenza, COVID-19, and the common cold overlap significantly, and only healthcare provider testing can definitively tell these infections apart. Home COVID-19 tests are a valuable tool to detect COVID-19, but they are unable to detect other viral infections. A person with a negative COVID test could still have influenza, RSV, or another viral infection. Persons with cold-like symptoms should stay home until their fever is gone and their symptoms are improving, even with a negative COVID-19 test.

To protect yourself and others from respiratory viruses this season, please consider doing the following:

- 1. Get Vaccinated, Boosted (and Treated)**

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are the best defense against severe illness, and you can get both vaccines at the same time. Visit myturn.ca.gov to find a vaccine clinic near you. If you test positive for COVID-19, contact your doctor or a [test-to-treat site](#) immediately to seek [treatment](#). Treatments work best when started right after symptoms begin.

- 2. Wear a Mask**

Wearing a mask in indoor public places is an excellent way to limit the spread of respiratory viruses. N95, KN95, and KF94 masks are the most protective.

3. **Wash Your Hands**

Frequent handwashing, with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, is an easy way to prevent getting sick and spreading germs. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available.

4. **Stay Home if You're Sick!**

It's crucial to stay home if you are feeling ill. Avoid close contact with others to protect them, and take the time you need to heal.

5. **Cover Your Cough or Sneeze**

Remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, your arm, or a tissue to help prevent the spread of winter viruses. Make sure to dispose of your tissue after, then wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.

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