

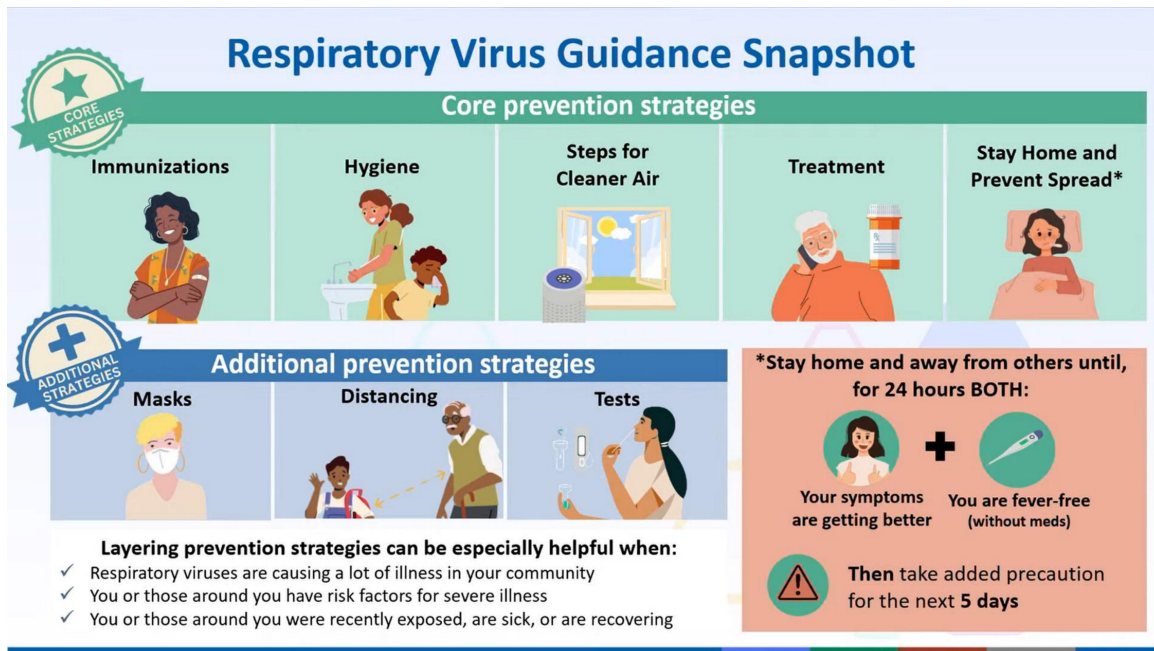
MERIDEN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SEASONAL HEALTH AND RESPIRATORY VIRUS UPDATES

February 26 – March 8, 2024

RESPIRATORY VIRUS GUIDANCE – UPDATED

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued updated Respiratory Virus Guidance which has been adopted by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH). CDC's guidance provides practical recommendations and information to help people lower health risks posed by a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, Influenza (flu) and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).



When you may have a respiratory virus...

Stay home and away from others (*including people you live with who are not sick*) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.

You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, **both** are true:

1. Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
2. You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities:

Take added precaution over the next 5 days, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors.

Protect Yourself and Your Family From Norovirus

Norovirus, commonly known as the “stomach flu” or “stomach bug” is a very contagious virus that causes nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain. Other symptoms may include fever, headache, or body aches.

Severe illness can lead to dehydration especially in young children, older adults, and immunocompromised individuals.

It can spread from person to person and through contaminated water, food, or surfaces.

Protect yourself and others from Norovirus by:

- Washing your hands and disinfecting surfaces often, especially
 - After using the toilet or changing diapers
 - Before eating, preparing, or handling food
 - Before giving yourself or someone else medicine
- Handling and preparing foods safely including washing produce, cooking shellfish thoroughly, and cleaning/sanitizing kitchen utensils, counters, and surfaces
- Staying home if you are sick with norovirus
 - Do not prepare food for others while you are sick
 - Wash any soiled linens or clothing immediately



For more information about Norovirus please visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/norovirus/index.html>



2/28/2024



SCAN ME

WEEKLY VIRAL RESPIRATORY DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

CT DPH conducts surveillance for lab-confirmed COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). We will continue to monitor these illnesses through our disease surveillance systems through the end of March. This data help us to understand the trends associated with each disease as well as the combined impact of these respiratory illnesses. From this, we can educate the public on prevention tips, targeting certain audiences that may be affected.

You can view the CT DPH Respiratory Viral Disease Surveillance dashboard [here](#).

The CDC reports moderate overall respiratory illness activity in Connecticut based on their [weekly viral respiratory illness snapshot](#) with no changes in flu or RSV levels, and decreasing cases of COVID-19.

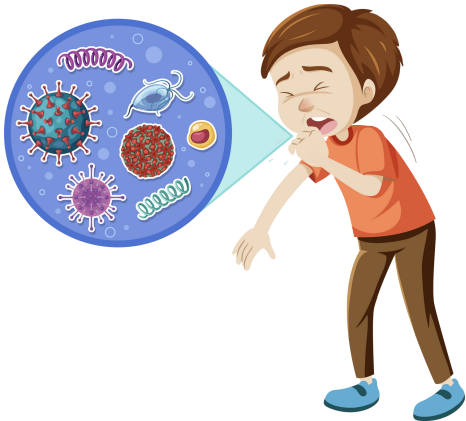


WINTER ILLNESS GUIDE

Colds, flu, and other respiratory illnesses are more common in the colder months. People are indoors more often, allowing viruses to pass more easily from one person to another. And the cold, dry air may weaken resistance.

If you are coughing and sneezing this winter, how do you know if you have a cold or something more serious? Do you need antibiotics? Are you contagious to others?

The following pages has information on common respiratory illnesses and what you should do if you have these symptoms.



COMMON COLD

What is it?

The common cold is an illness that primarily affects your nose, throat, and possibly your ears.

How do you feel?

You probably have a runny nose, scratchy throat, maybe a low-grade fever, and body aches. You are also sneezing or possibly coughing too.

What should you do?

Unfortunately there is no cure for the common cold. More than 200 viruses can cause colds, with the most common virus being Rhinovirus. Decongestants, cough drops, and other over-the-counter medications may help with symptoms. Rest and liquids are best for common colds. It's best to avoid close contact with others while you are sick to decrease the risk of transmission. Also, washing your hands frequently and covering your coughs and sneezes will help prevent transmission.

See a doctor if: symptoms linger beyond a few days or get worse, or if new symptoms develop.



INFLUENZA (FLU)

What is it?

The flu is a virus that affects your respiratory tract (mouth, nose, throat, and lung).

How do you feel?

You are probably feeling very tired, you have a fever, body aches, sore throat, and possibly a headache. You also might be vomiting or have diarrhea.

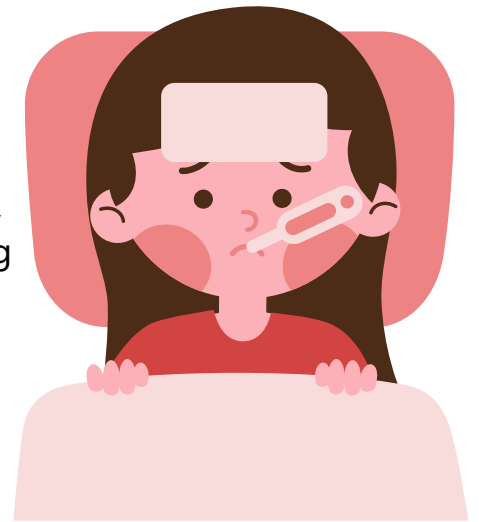
What should you do?

If you believe you may be sick with the flu it's best to call your doctor to talk about getting tested and the use of antiviral medication. Staying home while sick is also important to prevent others from getting sick as well.

See a doctor if: Symptoms get worse, you have new symptoms, or if you have a condition or situation that makes you vulnerable to flu complications.

Prevention

Yearly flu vaccination is recommended for anyone over the age of 6 months. Flu season traditionally runs from October to May, with activity usually peaking between December and March. Vaccination is the most effective way to protect yourself, and others, from the flu. **If you are still in need of your flu vaccine, call our Clinic at (203) 630-4234.**



RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS (RSV)

What is it?

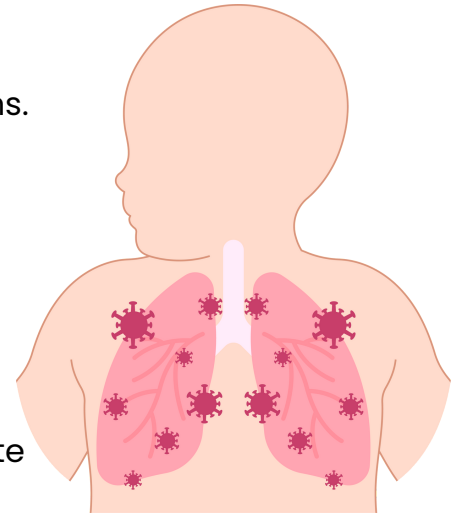
RSV is a viral infection that can lead to inflammation of the respiratory tract and lungs. In children younger than 1 year, RSV is the most common respiratory cause for hospital admissions.

Who is most at risk of severe RSV?

Infants (especially those born premature), children, older adults, people with heart and/or lung problems, and people with weakened immune systems.

How will my child feel?

Your child will feel like they have a cold. They may experience a runny nose, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, and decreased appetite and low fever.



How should I care for my child?

Provide general supportive care: ensure your child gets enough rest and drinks plenty of fluids. Monitor their breathing. If needed, provide them with over-the-counter children's acetaminophen to ease symptoms.

See a doctor if: Your child experiences a high fever, a bad cough, wheezing, or labored breathing.

Prevention

RSV vaccines approved by the Food and Drug Administration are available for children under age 2, adults age 60 and over, and people in the third trimester of pregnancy.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

What is it?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. It primarily affects your respiratory tract (mouth, nose, throat, and lungs).

How do you feel?

It depends. While some people with COVID-19 have few or no symptoms, other have a sore throat, congestion or runny nose, fever or chills. You may lose your sense of smell or taste, experience shortness of breath or body aches. Upset stomach, diarrhea or vomiting are also possible.



What should you do?

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms you should get tested and stay home if you have COVID like symptoms. You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true: Your symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

To find a COVID-19 testing site near you, please use the [CDC's COVID-19 Testing Locator Tool](#).

Prevention

There are ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, including recommended updated doses. The CDC recommends the 2023-2024 updated COVID-19 vaccines for everyone 6 months and older. If you have additional questions or concerns about vaccination, please talk with your healthcare provider.
- Maintain ventilation improvements.
- Avoid contact with people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Follow recommendations if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Information about COVID-19 vaccines can be found HERE.

A full list of clinics available in Connecticut can be found at <https://www.vaccines.gov/>. Search by zip code and type of vaccine desired. Please call before going to ensure dates, times, and supply is correct.

COVID-19 Home Test Kit Mailing Program

The COVID Test Mailing Program has been suspended as of March 8, 2024.

The [COVIDtests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov) program has distributed over 870 million tests directly to American households.

The U.S. government will continue to make COVID-19 tests available to uninsured individuals and underserved communities through existing outreach programs. Please contact a [HRSA-funded health center](#) or [ICATT location](#) near you to learn how to access low- or no-cost COVID-19 tests provided by the federal government. These links will lead you to a map where you can put in your zip code and find the nearest location.

If you still have home test kits, please check their expiration dates as they may have been extended. To check for the extended expiration date please click [here](#) for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website.

MERIDEN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Working for Our Community



165 Miller Street Meriden, CT 06450



(203) 630-4226



Monday-Friday 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

FOR ALL UPCOMING EVENTS AND NEWS:



City of Meriden Health & Human
Services Department



SCAN ME

Scan the QR code to visit our
website www.meridenhealth.com



CLINICAL SERVICES

(203) 630-4234

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

(203) 630-4226

PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

(203) 630-4288

MERIDEN SCHOOL READINESS

(203) 630-4222

WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

(203) 630-4245

JUVENILE ASSISTANCE AND DIVERSION BOARD (JAD)

(203) 639-5058

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

(203) 630-4221

SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

(203) 630-4239

SENIOR CENTER

22 WEST MAIN STREET
(203) 237-0066