



NEWS RELEASE

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IDPH Welcomes CDC Recommendations for RSV Shots for Pregnant Illinoisans, Infants & Seniors

Illinois is Entering Respiratory Virus Season with Protection Available for Three Illnesses Behind Last Winter's Tripledemic

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today endorsed the recommendation by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the newly FDA-approved vaccine for RSV that can be administered during weeks 32 to 36 of pregnancy to protect babies from the virus. This followed recommendations earlier this year for a preventive RSV treatment for infants up to 8 months and toddlers at high risk, and an RSV vaccine for people over 60.

IDPH urges those who are pregnant to consult with their doctor about whether they should receive the vaccine while pregnant or instead provide the preventive treatment for their newborn after birth. If the vaccine is received during pregnancy, infants will be protected and not need the preventive treatment after birth.

As fall begins, IDPH is closely monitoring data on COVID-19 as well as other respiratory viruses including flu and RSV. The latest data shows that new hospitalizations for COVID-19 remain at a low level across the state, with 671 new hospitalizations in the week ending September 16, an uptick of 5.7 percent from the previous week. There are currently 15 Illinois counties at a medium level for COVID-19 hospitalizations according to the [CDC national dashboard](#), meaning they exceed ten new cases per 100,000 population in the last week.

IDPH is urging Illinoisans to take advantage of the protection that is available from all three of the respiratory viruses that were responsible for last winter's tripledemic that caused a strain on resources in many hospitals, COVID-19, flu and RSV.

“As October approaches and the weather begins to change, it is important for all Illinois residents to prepare for the upcoming fall and winter virus seasons,” said IDPH Director, Dr. Sameer Vohra. “The good news is that we now have vaccines available for the three respiratory viruses – COVID-19, RSV and flu – that were responsible for 2022's tripledemic. These new and

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updated vaccines are powerful tools that can protect you and your loved ones by helping preventing hospitalizations and severe health outcomes.”

Earlier this month, the CDC recommended newly reformulated COVID-19 shots for everyone over the age of 6 months. The federal agencies have given the green light for updated mRNA vaccines developed by Moderna and Pfizer that target the currently circulating strains of the COVID-19 virus.

These newly approved shots are considered safe when given at the same time as other vaccines for the flu and RSV.

IDPH has set up a mobile response team to respond and provide COVID-19 vaccination services for long term care facilities throughout the state.

Studies have consistently shown that COVID-19 vaccines lower the risk of getting symptomatic COVID-19 and improve protection against serious illness, hospitalization and death. Most Americans can still get a COVID-19 vaccine for free. For people with health insurance, most plans will cover the COVID-19 vaccine at no cost. People who don't have health insurance or with health plans that do not cover the cost can get a free vaccine from their local health centers and pharmacies.

For those who are uninsured or under-insured, the CDC this summer launched the [Bridge Access Program](#) that will cover the cost of COVID-19 vaccines this fall. The [Vaccines for Children Program](#) will cover vaccines for eligible children.

In June, ACIP recommended use of a single dose of RSV vaccine for persons 60 years of age and older. In August, ACIP also recommended a new preventive measure against RSV for infants under 8 months and toddlers at high risk, a new monoclonal antibody shot called nirsevimab. Data showed that the treatment was highly effective, reducing hospitalizations in the age group by 77 percent.

On September 22, ACIP recommended seasonal administration of one dose of RSV vaccine during weeks 32 through 36 of pregnancy, to maximize protection for babies after birth.

For treatment of COVID-19, Illinoisans who experience symptoms can access no cost-share telehealth services through the [SIU School of Medicine Covid Test to Treat](#) services or call (217) 545-5100.

Illinois has more than 200,000 courses of effective therapeutic medications, including Paxlovid and Molnupiravir, available through providers and pharmacies that will continue to be provided free of charge until supplies run out.



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The CDC recently launched a [new national respiratory virus dashboard](#) that allows the public to view the levels of COVID-19, flu and RSV in each state.

Additional resources and COVID-19 data can be found at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19.html>.

The federal government has established a website that provides an all-purpose toolkit with information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.

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