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As Respiratory Virus Season Winds Down, Virus Levels Continue Downward Trend Across Illinois

CHICAGO – With the respiratory virus season continuing to wind down, Illinois’ overall respiratory virus level is now [Minimal](#) and all counties in the state are at Low level for [COVID-19 hospitalizations](#), according to CDC data for the week ending April 20. The total number of COVID-19 hospitalizations in Illinois declined 22% during the same week, according to the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#).

“I am happy to see the continued decline in respiratory viruses across the state,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “As the respiratory season winds down, I want to make Illinoisians aware that COVID-19 has not been following the same seasonal trends as flu and RSV – at least not yet. For this reason, I want to remind those individuals most vulnerable to severe COVID-19 about their options to stay protected. If you are 65 years of age or older, you are eligible for a second dose of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. If you are immunosuppressed, you are eligible to receive an additional updated shot two months after your previous dose.”

The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issued updated guidelines in February that recommend a second dose of the updated COVID-19 shots for those who are more vulnerable to severe outcomes. A [CDC presentation](#) that was provided for the ACIP meeting included preliminary data that showed that 96% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 in October and November 2023, had not received the updated Covid shot last fall.

The CDC offers information on how to [Stay Up to Date](#) with COVID-19 vaccines.

If people do develop symptoms of a respiratory illness – including coughing, sneezing, sore throat, a runny nose or fever – IDPH recommends staying home and away from others to avoid spreading illness. If you need to seek medical care, you should wear a mask to limit the risk to

others – or try to schedule a telehealth appointment. In addition, public health experts urge anyone who has been recently exposed to COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses to wear a mask when in crowded areas, and if visiting someone at high risk for severe disease. For more on when and where to use a mask, [click HERE](#).

To help keep the public informed about conditions around the state, IDPH maintains an [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#) that is updated weekly on Fridays. This report provides the public the latest data on hospital visits, seasonal trends, lab test positivity and demographic data

Every household in the U.S. is eligible to receive four free at-home tests through the [COVID.gov](#) website. IDPH has also made available a single swab triple-test for Flu/RSV and COVID-19, at no cost, to high risk congregate care settings and local health departments.

For those who are uninsured or under-insured, the CDC launched the [Bridge Access Program](#) last year that covers the cost of COVID-19 vaccines. The [Vaccines for Children Program](#) covers all ACIP recommended vaccines for eligible children, including nirsevimab for RSV protection.

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. An additional option is the [NIH Test to Treat line](#) or call 1-800-682-2829 to get access to no-cost care.

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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NOTE: With the respiratory virus season winding down, IDPH will suspend regular updates until further notice. The public will be able to continue to monitor statewide conditions at IDPH's [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#).