



Take Care of YOU

A Health and Wellness Bulletin | September 2023



Protect Yourself and the People in your Circle of Care

Vaccine Resources Near You

Find a COVID-19 vaccine provider

- Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- Text your zip code to 438829
- Call 1-800-232-0233
- Call the Alaska COVID Helpline at 907-646-3322

Find an influenza vaccine provider

- Most pharmacies offer the flu vaccine without an appointment
- Visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

Find a RSV vaccine provider

- Talk to your healthcare provider or local pharmacist

We are approaching the season of respiratory illnesses. COVID-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and influenza (flu) are all currently circulating, and it is possible to contract two or all three at the same time, increasing the risk of more serious illness. However, with everything we've been through in the last few years, we can approach this season with less panic and with a greater sense of awareness.

Most adults have experienced at least one infection of influenza and/or RSV in their lifetime, and now many of us can also add COVID-19 to that list. This is the first season, however, that vaccine immunizations for all three viruses are available.

A rise in cases is likely as we move into winter months when people tend to stay indoors more and gather with loved ones for the holidays. To combat this, the CDC recommends vaccination, which is an effective tool to protect yourself and those around you from serious illness. All people ages six months and older can choose to receive COVID-19 vaccines and a seasonal flu vaccine. People ages 60 and older can receive an RSV vaccination, and infants and pregnant women may receive RSV monoclonal antibodies. While it is still possible to get sick after getting vaccinated against a virus, if you choose to immunize yourself, it is less likely you will have a severe outcome. Vaccinations create a population that is more resistant to the spread of these viruses.

But remember, if you do get sick, stay at home as much as possible. If you must be in the vicinity of other individuals, keep a distance, and if you choose to wear a mask, wear a high quality one that fits well over the nose and mouth. Last but certainly not least, don't forget to wash your hands thoroughly and often.

Side note: Although Shingles is not a respiratory illness, it is also a risk this time of year. The CDC recommends two doses of the shingles vaccine for all people aged 50 and older and adults who have weakened immune systems.