

Holiday Health Hints

Help Protect Your Family Against Respiratory Illness Before the Holidays

(NAPS)—A bout of COVID-19 or the flu will put a damper on any holiday celebration. One of the most effective ways to help prevent these illnesses is by staying up to date on immunizations. If you haven't received an annual flu vaccination and updated COVID-19 vaccination yet, it's not too late to do so. Vaccinations to guard against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and pneumococcal pneumonia are also available and recommended for those eligible.

Who Should Get Vaccinated

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people six months and older, with rare exceptions, should get the updated annual flu vaccine. The CDC also recommends that everyone ages six months and older should get the updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine, unless otherwise noted, to help restore and enhance protection against the currently circulating virus variants.

It's especially important to protect those at increased risk of complications from severe flu or COVID-19 illness, such as adults 65 and older, people with certain immunocompromising or chronic medical conditions, infants, young children and pregnant women.

The CDC also recommends a single dose of any FDA-authorized RSV vaccine for adults ages 75 and older and those ages 60-74 at increased risk of severe RSV. The CDC just expanded the age group that pneumococcal vaccines are recommended for to adults 50 and older (previously it was 65 and older); the vaccine is also recommended for children younger than five years and adults at increased risk for pneumococcal disease.

"Crowded airports and train stations, large gatherings with family and friends and more time spent indoors as temperatures drop are all contributing factors to the spread of respiratory viruses," said Dr. Sree Chaguturu, executive vice president and chief medical officer at CVS Health. "Immunizations



You can arm yourself and your family against respiratory illnesses that can ruin the holidays and much more.

are the best protection against these viruses, and getting vaccinated now, before Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, makes sense because it takes about two weeks for the body to build up protection."

What Else You Can Do

Chaguturu also recommends covering coughs and sneezes, frequent hand-washing throughout the day, and avoiding close contact with those who are sick to help prevent the spread of germs.

Who Can Help

Most insurance plans cover flu and COVID-19 vaccinations at no cost, and other preventive vaccines may be available at no cost, as well. Check with your health care insurance provider to determine coverage.

Getting the vaccines can be easy. One way is to visit [CVS.com](https://www.cvs.com) or the CVS Pharmacy app to schedule an immunization appointment at CVS Pharmacy or MinuteClinic.