

## HCPA 2024 Staff Respiratory Virus Guidelines

Annually, respiratory viruses account for a significant number of illnesses, hospitalizations, and fatalities in the United States. These include not only the virus responsible for COVID-19 but also other types such as influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Fortunately, there are preventive measures that can be taken to safeguard individuals and others from the health hazards posed by these respiratory viruses.

HCPA follows CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidelines which provides practical recommendations and information to help people lower risk from range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

The core prevention strategies to CDC's Respiratory Virus Guidelines are as followed:

### Immunizations

- Talk with a healthcare provider to make sure you are up to date on vaccines
- Review the [vaccine schedule](#) to become familiar with the immunizations recommended for you and when you should get them.
- Locate [flu and COVID-19 vaccines](#) available near you

### Hand Hygiene Practices

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough, or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands
- Handwashing with soap removes germs from your hands, making them less likely to infect your respiratory system when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth
- If soap and water are not available, using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can kill germs
- Learn and use proper [handwashing techniques](#)

### Steps for Cleaner Air

- Some germs spread in the air between people that happens easily indoor and in crowded spaces with poor airflow. To reduce the risk of exposure, it helps to improve air quality by increasing airflow, cleaning the air, or opting to gather outdoors
- Bring as much fresh air into your home as possible by opening doors, windows, and or using exhaust fans
- At home, you can change your HVAC filter every 3 months or according to the manufacturer's instructions (HVAC, a system with air ducts that goes through out the home).
- Use a portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaner
- Use CDC's [interactive Home Ventilation](#) tool to see how particles change as you adjust ventilation settings

### Treatment

- Treatment for COVID-19 and for flu can lessen symptoms and shorten the time you are sick
- Treatment may reduce the risk complications, including those that can result in hospitalization
- Know the treatment options for [COVID-19](#) and [flu](#) before you get sick.

### Preventing Spread of Respiratory Viruses When You're Sick

- When you have a respiratory virus infection, you can spread it to others
- If you have symptoms or a respiratory virus (cough, fever, chills, runny nose, etc.), it is recommended that you stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick)
- 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).
- 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 for respiratory viruses](#) if you will be around other people indoors.

### Additional Prevention Strategies

- Wear a **mask** to reduce the number of germs you breathe in or out
- Putting a **physical distance** between yourself and others can help lower the risk or spreading a respiratory virus
- **Testing** for respiratory viruses can help you find out if you are currently infected with a certain respiratory virus and can help you decide what to do next

### COVID-19 Test Kits

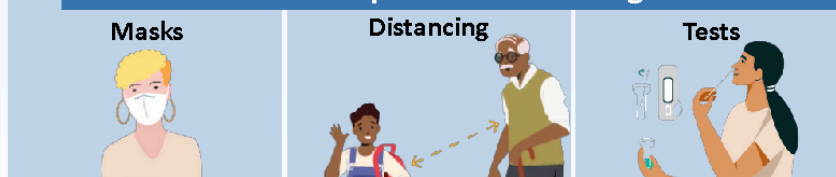
- Free COVID-19 rapid antigen test kits are available in the HCPA's health office. If you are interested, please contact our health office at 651-209-8004 (please note that supply is limited. Supply will be given at a first come first serve basis)

## Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot

### Core prevention strategies



### Additional prevention strategies



#### Layering prevention strategies can be especially helpful when:

- ✓ Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering

\*Stay home and away from others until, for 24 hours BOTH:



Your symptoms are getting better



You are fever-free (without meds)



Then take added precaution for the next 5 days

All protocols subject to change based on CDC. For further information, please visit CDC's [Respiratory Virus Guidelines](#)