

# Respiratory Disease Season

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COVID, Influenza, and RSV

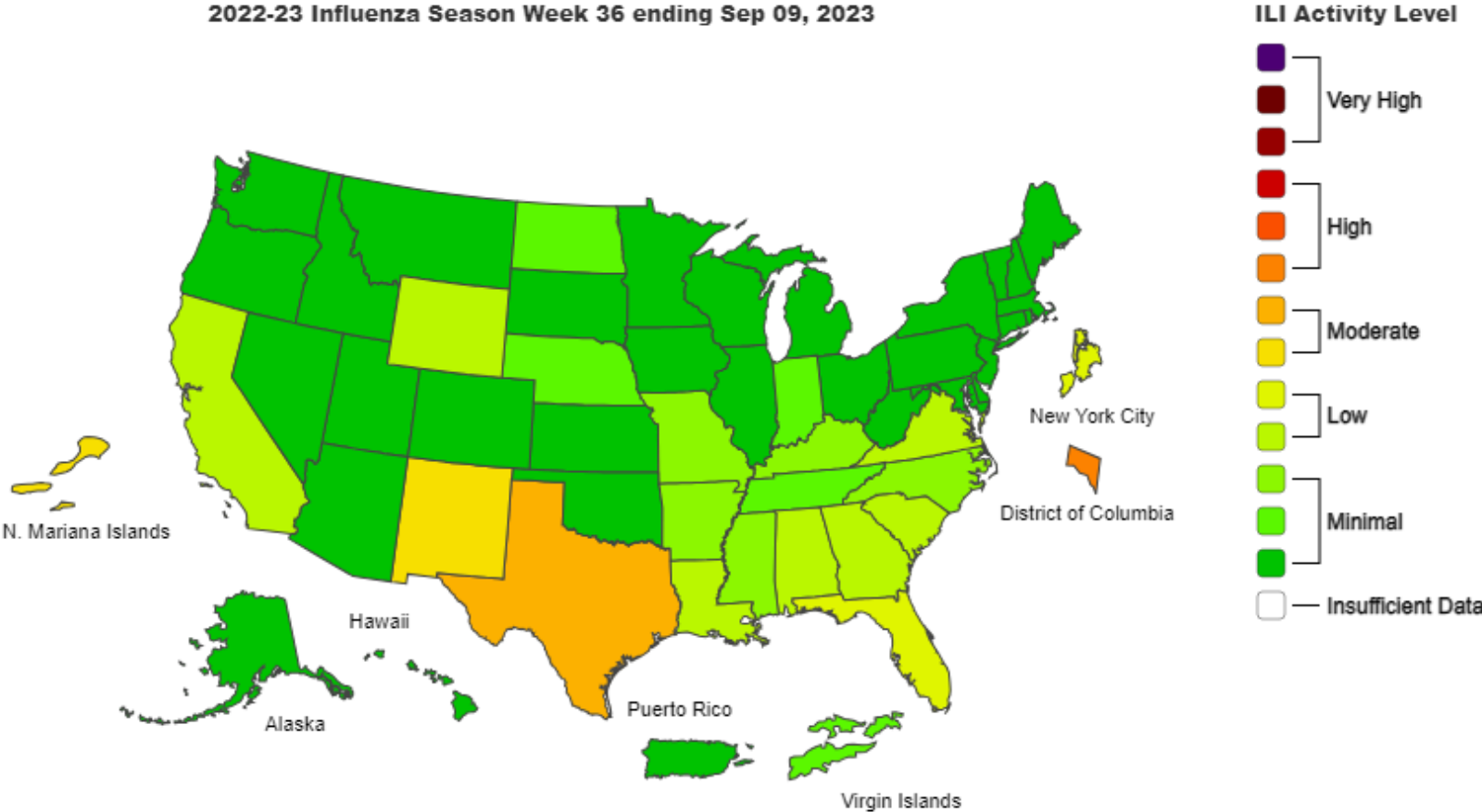
Anil T. Mangla, Ph.D., MS, MPH, FRSPH | September 2023

# Overview

- Viruses that cause respiratory diseases (including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV) circulate more during the fall and winter season.
- Individuals who are immunocompromised or who have other chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for complications from these viruses.
- This is the first year that a vaccine is available for all three: COVID-19, influenza, and RSV (new vaccine).
- Upcoming respiratory disease season expected to have **similar** number of total hospitalizations compared to last year.
  - Number of hospitalizations expected to be higher than that experienced **prior** to COVID-19 pandemic

# National Outpatient Respiratory Illness Activity Map

2022-23 Influenza Season Week 36 ending Sep 09, 2023



DC Level: High (lowest level)

# COVID-19

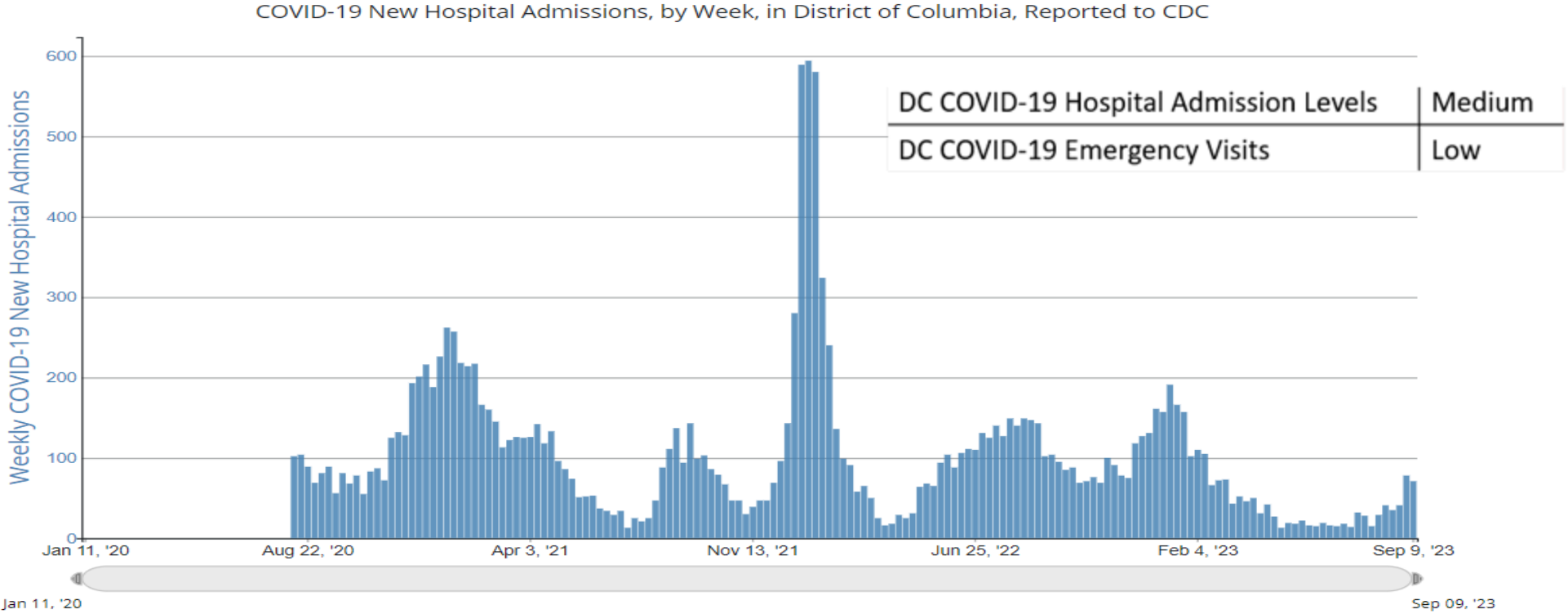
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# COVID-19: The Basics

## What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) is a disease caused by a virus named SARS-CoV-2. It can be very contagious and spreads quickly. **1,436 people have died from COVID-19 in DC.**
- COVID-19 most often causes **respiratory symptoms that can feel much like a cold, the flu, or pneumonia.** COVID-19 may attack more than your lungs and respiratory system. Other parts of your body may also be affected by the disease.
- **Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms,** but some people become severely ill.
- Some people including those with minor or no symptoms will develop Post-COVID Conditions – also called **“Long COVID.”**

# COVID-19 Hospitalizations by Week in Washington, DC



Sources: [https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends\\_weeklyhospitaladmissions\\_select\\_11](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_weeklyhospitaladmissions_select_11)  
[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps\\_new-admissions-rate-state](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#maps_new-admissions-rate-state)

# COVID-19: Prevention

Prevention Measures include:

- Improving ventilation
- Getting tested for COVID-19 if needed
- Following recommendations for what to do if you have been exposed
- Staying home if you have suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- Seeking treatment if you have COVID-19 and are at high risk of getting very sick
- Avoiding contact with people who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19
- **\*\*\*Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines\*\*\***

# Latest vaccine recommendations

- There is a new updated COVID-19 vaccine for Fall 2023.
- Everyone aged 5 and older should get 1 dose of the updated vaccine
- People moderately or severely immunocompromised may get additional doses of the new vaccine after consulting their healthcare provider.
- Parents of infants/children 6 months to 4 years old should consult their healthcare provider regarding dosing.

## Treatments

- Treatments are available for COVID-19; please consult your healthcare provider.



# COVID-19 Vaccine Opportunities

- COVID-19 vaccines can be obtained at primary care providers, pharmacy, or the Home Vaccination Program\*\*.
- Community groups can host events and request vaccine administrations through the Vaccine Exchange\*.
  - \*Vaccine Exchange – DC Health connects community groups with vaccine providers (<https://request.vaccineexchange.dc.gov/>)
  - \*\*Home Vaccination Program – Providers will visit homebound individuals and can be accessed at 1-855-363-0333.

# INFLUENZA (“Flu”)

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# Flu: The Basics

## What is Influenza (Flu)?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the **nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs**. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

## How Flu Spreads

Most experts believe that flu viruses **spread mainly by tiny droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk**. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, **a person might get flu by touching a surface or object** that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes.

# Flu: Prevention

The first and most important step in preventing flu is to **get a flu vaccine** each year. Flu vaccine has been shown to reduce flu related illnesses and the risk of serious flu complications.

Much like COVID-19, the CDC recommends everyday preventive actions (like **staying away from people who are sick**, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent **handwashing**) to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses.

# Flu: Treatment

- When treatment is started within 1-2 days after flu symptoms begin, **influenza antiviral drugs** can lessen symptoms and shorten the time a patient is sick by 1 or 2 days. They might also prevent some flu complications, like pneumonia.
- For people at higher risk (including older adults) of serious flu complications, **treatment with influenza antiviral drugs can mean the difference between milder or more serious illness possibly resulting in a hospital stay.**

# Flu Vaccine Opportunities

- Flu vaccines can be obtained at primary care providers, pharmacy, or the Home Vaccination Program\*\*.
- Community groups can host events and request vaccine administrations through the Vaccine Exchange\*.
  - \*Vaccine Exchange – DC Health connects community groups with vaccine providers (<https://request.vaccineexchange.dc.gov/>)
  - \*\*Home Vaccination Program – Providers will visit homebound individuals and can be accessed at 1-855-363-0333.

# RSV

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## RSV: The Basics

- **Respiratory syncytial virus**, or RSV, is a **common respiratory virus** that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms.
- Most people recover in a week or two, but **RSV can be serious**.
- **Infants and older adults are more likely to develop severe RSV and need hospitalization.**
- There is no specific treatment for RSV.



# RSV: Symptoms

- According to the CDC, people infected with RSV usually show symptoms within 4 to 6 days after getting infected. Symptoms of RSV infection usually include
  - Runny nose
  - Decrease in appetite
  - Coughing
  - Sneezing
  - Fever
  - *Wheezing (distinctive)*
- These symptoms usually appear in stages and not all at once. In **very young infants** with RSV, the only symptoms may be irritability, decreased activity, and breathing difficulties. **Older adults** may have no symptoms.
- Almost all children will have had an RSV infection by their second birthday.

# RSV: Prevention

- Preventive measures are similar to COVID-19 and the Flu:
  - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or shirt sleeve, not hands
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Avoid close contact with others, such as kissing, shaking hands, and sharing cups and eating utensils
  - Clean frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and mobile devices



# RSV: Vaccine Information

## Adults 60 years old and over:

- Adults 60 years of age and older may receive a **single dose of RSV vaccine** using shared clinical decision-making.

## Infants and young children:

- Two monoclonal antibody products are available through consultation with your healthcare provider.
- Monoclonal antibodies are immunizations that provide an extra layer of defense to help fight RSV infections and protect children from getting very sick.

# National RSV Data

## Annual RSV Burden Among Adults Ages 65 Years and Older



**900,000–1,400,000** medical encounters



**60,000–160,000** hospitalizations



**6,000–10,000** deaths



# In closing...

- Visit [dchealth.dc.gov](https://dchealth.dc.gov) to get more information about COVID-19, Flu, and RSV.

## What You Need to Know About Fall and Winter Respiratory Illnesses COVID-19, Flu and RSV

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**Fall is in the air, which means cough and cold weather viruses are too!**

Some of the most common and dangerous viruses this time of year are flu (influenza), COVID-19 and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus). The good news is that these illnesses can be prevented by vaccines.

Here is how you can protect yourself and your family from Flu, COVID-19 and RSV this fall:



Wash your hands



Mask in crowded areas



Stay home when sick



Cover your cough



Get the vaccines recommended for you

Please refer to the following immunization information for children and infants, older adults, and the general population:

	INFLUENZA (FLU)	COVID-19	RSV
Infants*	✓	✓	✓**
General Population 2–59 Years	✓	✓	✗
Older Adults (60 and up)	✓	✓	✓

**Please Note:** It is important to contact your insurance carrier before making any vaccination appointment. Currently, the RSV vaccine requires a prescription from a medical provider.

Please contact your primary care provider or pharmacist with any additional questions about the vaccines.

### Vaccine Exchange For Flu or COVID (not RSV)

DC Health connects community groups with vaccine providers. Community groups can learn more at [request.vaccineexchange.dc.gov](https://request.vaccineexchange.dc.gov).

### Home Vaccination Program

Providers will visit residents who:

1. Have difficulty leaving their home
2. Mostly communicate in languages other than English
3. Have insurance through Medicaid or the Healthcare Alliance

This program can be accessed at 1-855-363-0333.

### Additional Information

- ▶ District government agencies and nonprofits can request free COVID-19 tests, free KN95 masks and PPE supplies from the Office of Contracting and Procurement ([ocp.dc.gov/page/federal-surplus-property-program](https://ocp.dc.gov/page/federal-surplus-property-program)).
- ▶ Residents can also purchase KN95 and COVID-19 tests at pharmacies or online.
- ▶ DC Health continues to monitor the spread of these respiratory illnesses in the District and will provide updated guidance as needed.

\*Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are for ages six months and up. \*\*The RSV immunization for infants/young children is a monoclonal antibody and is recommended for all infants 8 months and younger, and children up to 18 months with special medical conditions.

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For more information on the District's COVID-19 response, visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov)