



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 1, 2024

Dear Colleagues:

We are writing to notify you that today the CDC issued new [Respiratory Virus Guidance](#) for the general public and in community settings, which provides practical recommendations and information to help people lower health risks posed by a range of common respiratory viral illnesses, including COVID-19, flu, and RSV.

CDC is updating community recommendations now because we are in a different place regarding COVID - there is a high degree of population immunity, there are vaccines available for COVID, flu, and RSV, and we are seeing far fewer hospitalizations and deaths related to COVID.

This guidance does NOT apply to healthcare settings. CDC offers separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)).

### Core Prevention Strategies

This CDC guidance emphasizes the following prevention strategies for common respiratory viral illnesses:

- Stay up to date with immunizations
- Practice good hygiene (practices that improve cleanliness)
- Take steps for cleaner air
- When you may have a respiratory virus:
  - Use precautions to prevent spread
  - Seek health care promptly for testing and/or treatment if you have risk factors for severe illness; treatment may help lower your risk of severe illness

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

Prior CDC guidance advised that individuals who test positive for COVID-19 stay home for at least 5 days and isolate themselves from others in the home.

Updated CDC guidance for respiratory viruses is as follows:

- Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause.

- 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 when you will be around other people indoors. This is especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.

We appreciate your attention to this updated guidance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Niles Kalyanaraman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Niles Kalyanaraman, MD, FACP  
Deputy Secretary, Public Health Services