



Respiratory Viruses are Germs That Affect Your Respiratory System (Lungs, Nose, Airway)

Many respiratory virus infections occur during late summer/early fall and winter, but they can also occur year-round.

- **Rhinovirus** - the common cold
- **Influenza** - the Flu
- **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)**
- **COVID-19**
- **Seasonal Coronaviruses** viruses that are related to but different from COVID-19
- **Human Parainfluenza Viruses (HPIV)**
- **Human metapneumovirus (HMPV)**
- **Adenovirus**

Respiratory viruses can cause many different symptoms including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Body Aches
- Sore Throat
- Headache
- Runny or Stuffy Nose



Most people get better quickly, but some people can get very sick or even die.

People most at risk of getting seriously ill are:

- Children under 5
- Adults over 65
- Anyone with other health problems

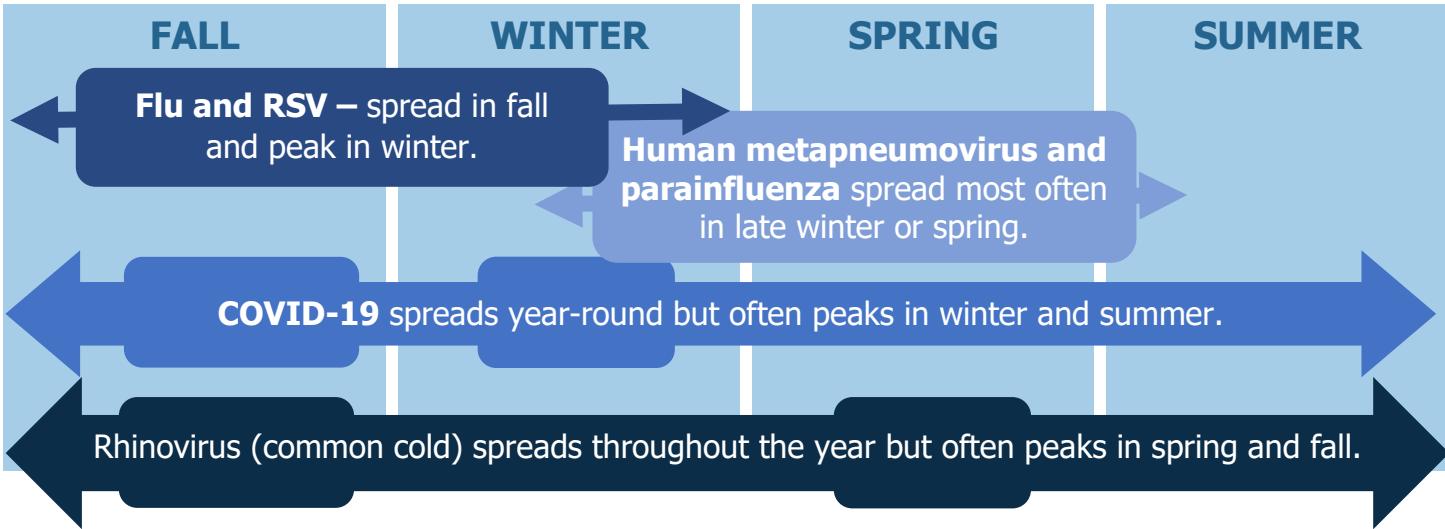
Viruses can spread when you're near someone who is sick.

This might include sitting next to a coughing coworker or classmate or having dinner with a family member who has a cough, fever, or sore throat. Respiratory viruses can also get on things like tables and doorknobs and infect people who touch them.

You can spread a virus without feeling sick.

Even if you don't feel sick, you can still spread some viruses to others who might be at risk of getting very sick.

Respiratory viruses can spread throughout the year, but some are more common during certain times or seasons.





Most people benefit from vaccines.

Flu protection

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot each fall.

RSV protection

- Babies under 8 months can get nirsevimab or clesrovimab
- Pregnant women (32–36 weeks) can get the RSV vaccine to protect their babies after birth.
- Adults 75+ and those 50–74 with health risks should also get the RSV vaccine.

COVID-19 protection

- Everyone 6 months and older may receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Especially:
 - Pregnant women
 - Infants and children 6-23 months old
 - Adults aged 65 and older
 - Anyone 6 months and older who are at higher risk due to underlying conditions¹
 - Anyone 6 months and older who has never been vaccinated

Talk to your health care provider to see which vaccines are right for you.

All respiratory virus vaccines can be given at the same visit. For more information on respiratory vaccine recommendations, consult the American Academy of Family Physicians², the American Academy of Pediatrics³, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)⁴, and the [PA DOH Respiratory Virus Vaccines page](#)⁵.

What to do if you feel sick.

- **Stay home** until you feel better **AND** you have not had a fever for 24 hours (without using fever reducing medicine).
- **Avoid others**, especially people who may get seriously sick from respiratory viruses, if you've had cold-like symptoms.
- **Test for COVID-19 or flu** if you have symptoms.
- **Can't test at home?** See a doctor for testing.
- **Act fast!** If you have COVID-19 or flu, your doctor can give you medicine to help you feel better and stay out of the hospital – but they work best if started within **2 days** of feeling sick.
- **Clean surfaces** and **wash your hands** often.

SPREAD
KINDNESS,
NOT GERMS!

GET YOUR VACCINE
TO PROTECT AGAINST RESPIRATORY VIRUSES

As much as possible, stay away from others if you are sick.

DON'T SHARE
FLU, COVID-19,
AND RSV VIRUSES

Viruses can easily be shared between family members and friends.

1. CDC.gov, Underlying Conditions and the Higher Risk for Severe COVID-19
2. AAFP.org, COVID-19 Vaccine Fall 2025-26 Immunization Recommendations
3. HealthyChildren.org, AAP Releases Its Own Evidence-Based Immunization Schedule
4. ACOG.org, COVID-19 Vaccination Considerations for Obstetric-Gynecologic Care
5. [PA.gov](#), Stay Up to Date on Respiratory Virus Vaccines