

# How to Stay Well this Cold, COVID and Flu Season

Here is some information on how you can stay healthy and look after yourself and others during the cold, COVID and flu season.

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## Managing Symptoms at Home

- This [screening tool](#) **A** may help you figure out what illness you have and what to do next.
- Advice for managing children's symptoms at home for:
  - [Cough](#) **B** | [Fever](#) **C** | [Flu](#) **D** | [Viral gastroenteritis](#) **E** | AboutKidsHealth



If you have a cold, flu or COVID-19, there are things you can do at home to feel better and stop the spread of germs:

- Stay home from work or school if you are sick and wear a mask around others
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- **Always check with a health care provider (doctor, nurse or pharmacist) or call 811 for advice on over-the-counter medicines, treatments and medical conditions**
  - Medicines like ibuprofen and acetaminophen can help with fever and pain
  - Over-the-counter cough and cold medicine should **not** be given to children younger than 6 years old unless advised by your health care provider.
- Gargling with warm salt water can help a sore throat
- Use a humidifier to help with a stuffy nose
- Eat light and healthy meals
- Avoid spreading germs:
  - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds

If you feel worse after a few days:

- Call your primary care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) or Health 811 (dial 811, TTY: 1-866-797-0007).



Go to your local emergency department if:

- You have difficulty breathing or pain or pressure in the chest.
- You suddenly feel dizzy or confused.

Other links:

[Respiratory Viruses: Information for Parents & Caregivers](#)

**F** | Toronto Public Health

[Comparison of COVID-19, influenza, common cold, and gastrointestinal illness](#) **G** | Alberta Health Services



## Continue to protect yourself and others – get your COVID and flu vaccines now

These vaccines are available for anyone who is 6 months and older.

- Children age 6 months to 2 years need to go to a Toronto Public Health vaccine clinic, a doctor or nurse for a flu vaccine.

It is safe to get the flu and COVID vaccines at the same time.

Vaccines will be available at:

- [Community pharmacies](#) **H**
- [Toronto Public Health vaccine clinics](#) - These clinics will permanently close after December 13, 2023 **I**
- Some doctors' offices (ask your healthcare provider)
- If you are homebound, or can't leave your home to receive the vaccine, speak to your primary care provider about [Homebound COVID-19 vaccinations](#). **J**



## Stop the spread: Test for COVID-19 if you feel sick

FREE Rapid Antigen Tests are available at:

- Bathurst-Finch Hub (Dental Clinic) 540 Finch Avenue West, 2nd Floor:  
Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm
- Fairview Community Health Centre (Dental Clinic) 5 Fairview Mall Drive, Suite 357:  
Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm
- North York Civic Centre 5100 Yonge Street, Ground Floor:  
Monday to Friday 8:00am to 4:00pm - This clinic will be closing permanently after December 13, 2023.

Your local library will have free antigen testing kits and your local pharmacy may also have free kits.

Check if you are [eligible](#) **K** for publicly funded PCR or rapid molecular testing.





## COVID-19 Treatment

If you test positive for COVID-19, ask your primary care provider or pharmacist if you would benefit from [Paxlovid](#) **L** or other COVID-19 treatment.

Other links:

[COVID-19: What to Do if You Have Symptoms](#)

**M** | Toronto Public Health

[COVID-19 testing and treatment](#)

**N** | Ontario Ministry of Health



## Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

You may have heard about the new RSV vaccine for adults.

Ask your health care provider if you would benefit.

It is currently only covered by OHIP for those 60 years and older living in:

- Long-term care homes
- Elder care lodges
- Some retirement home residents

The RSV vaccine can be purchased from your community pharmacy if you have a prescription from your family doctor but it may not be covered by OHIP.

Other links:

[Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(in children\)](#)

**O** | Ontario Ministry of Health

[Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\):  
vaccines in adults 60 years of age and older](#)

**P** | Toronto Public Health



## Caregiver support

The Ontario Caregiver Organization has resources and programs to support caregivers. Click [here](#) **Q** for more information about their Essential Care Partner Support Hub which provides access to guidance, resources, tools and opportunities to connect to other caregivers.

