

Respiratory Updates

September 19, 2024

Heather Harmon-Sloan, Respiratory Communications Coordinator

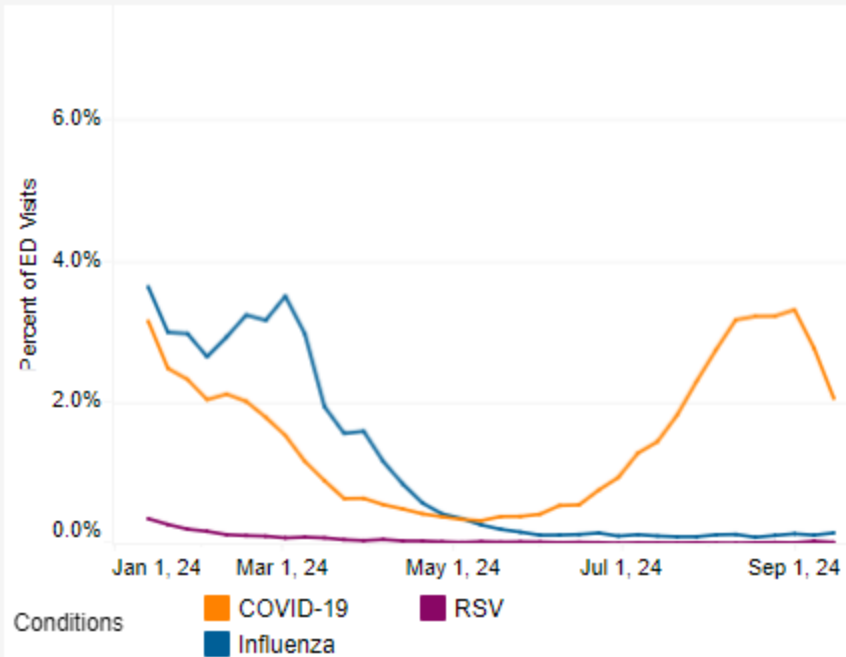
Respiratory Data Trends

ED Visits for COVID-19, Flu, & RSV in Virginia

For Week Ending **September 14, 2024:**

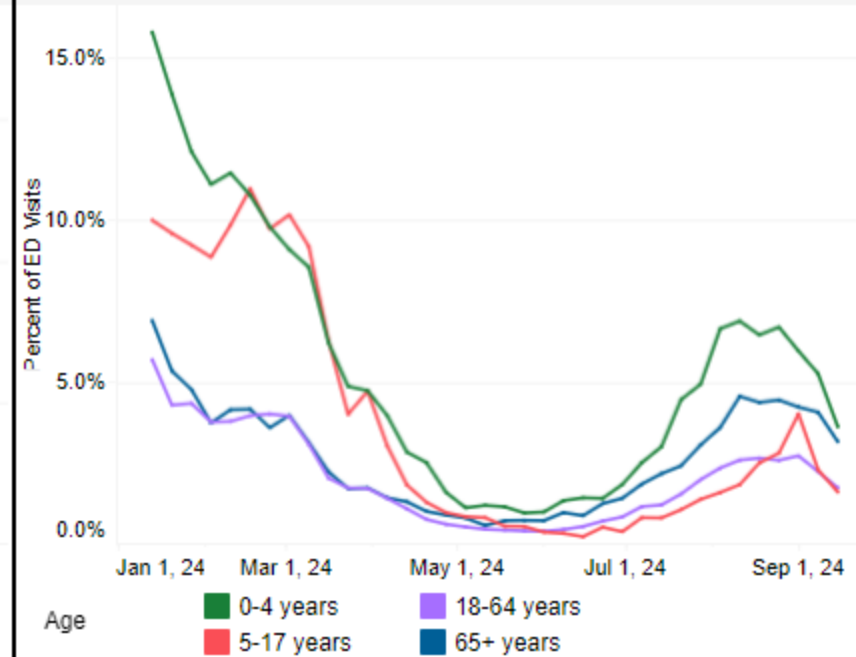
Percent of ED Visits for Diagnosed Respiratory Viruses

Among all emergency department visits in Virginia, there were **2.1%** diagnosed with COVID-19, **0.1%** diagnosed with influenza, and **0.0%** diagnosed with RSV.



Percent of ED Visits by Age for Diagnosed Respiratory Viruses

The largest proportion of ED visits by age group were among **65+ years old** for COVID-19, **0-4 years old** for influenza, and **0-4 years old** for RSV.



Respiratory Illness Guidance

Preventing Respiratory Illness

**STAY
HEALTHY
YEAR-ROUND**



Protect yourself and others from respiratory viruses:

-  **Stay up to date with immunizations**
Immunizations are available for COVID-19, flu, and RSV
-  **Practice good hygiene**
Cover coughs and sneezes
Wash hands often
-  **Clean** frequently touched surfaces often
-  **Improve** indoor air quality at home and elsewhere

What to Do When You're Sick

People with symptoms of a respiratory virus should stay home and away from others to prevent spreading illness.

People can go back to 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)

Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take **additional prevention strategies** for the next five days to help prevent disease spread:

- Taking more steps for cleaner air
- Enhancing hygiene practices
- Wearing a well-fitting mask
- Keeping a distance from others
- Getting tested to inform your actions to prevent spread to others

Additional precautions are especially important to protect those most at risk for severe illness, including those over 65 and people with weakened immune systems

Source: [VDH Precautions When Sick](#)



IF YOU'RE SICK

When you have symptoms of a respiratory virus, **stay home and away from others**.

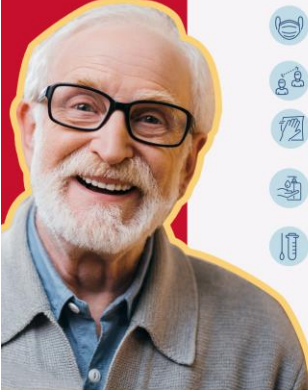
If you have risk factors for severe illness, **get tested** to see if treatment for COVID-19 or flu is an option

You can go back to your normal activities when, for 24 hours:

Your symptoms are **getting better**
AND
You are **fever free** (and you are not using fever-reducing medication)

Once you resume normal activities, take **added precautions** for the next **five days**.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



ADDITIONAL PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Protect yourself and others
For the next 5 days take added precautions while you may still be contagious:

- **Take** steps for cleaner air at home and elsewhere
- **Consider wearing** a well-fitting mask around others
- **Keep** physical distance
- **Clean** and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily
- **Cover** coughs and sneezes and **wash** hands often
- **Get tested** for COVID-19 before gathering with people indoors

Added precautions are especially important to protect people with **risk factors** of severe illness, including people aged **65 years** and older and people with weakened immune systems.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Respiratory Resources

- VDH Respiratory Disease Website
 - vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/respiratory-diseases-in-virginia/
- VDH Respiratory Communication Toolkit (flyers, social media, posters in multiple languages)
 - vdh.virginia.gov/news/toolkits/respiratory-diseases-toolkit/
- CDC Respiratory Illness Website
 - cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/index.html



Stay up to date on your vaccines



Avoid severe illness by staying up to date with your flu and COVID-19 vaccines

Stay home when you're sick



Avoid close contact with people so you do not spread germs to others when you are sick

Wash your hands regularly



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your elbow when you cough or sneeze



Dispose of used tissues and wash your hands afterwards



Avoid touching face, nose, mouth, and eyes to avoid the risk of infection

 RESPIRATORY VIRUS IMMUNIZATIONS 					
VACCINE	ABOUT THE VACCINE	WHO CAN GET IT	WHY GET IT	WHEN TO GET IT	WHERE TO GET IT
FLU VACCINE	A vaccine to protect against common flu viruses.	Everyone aged six months or older. Some children may need multiple doses.	It can help protect against illness, hospitalization, and death. For those who get the flu, it can reduce the severity of illness.	Every year. September and October are the best months to get the flu vaccine.	Health departments, pharmacies, and medical offices. Find a location at vaccinate.virginia.gov
COVID-19 VACCINE	A vaccine to protect against the COVID-19 variants that are expected to be most common.	Everyone aged six months or older. Some people (children, those with weakened immune systems, older adults) may be recommended to get multiple doses.	It can help protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. It might also reduce the risk of Long COVID.	When the updated COVID-19 vaccine becomes available (usually in the fall). If you recently had COVID-19, you likely have infection-based immunity and can consider waiting three months after your infection before getting vaccinated.	Health departments, pharmacies, and medical offices. Find a location at vaccinate.virginia.gov
RSV VACCINE FOR OLDER ADULTS	A one-time vaccine for older adults prevents severe RSV illness.	• All adults aged 75 years or older. • Adults aged 60 years or older at increased risk for severe illness.	It can help protect against illness, hospitalization, and death.	September and October are the best months to get it.	Health departments, pharmacies, and medical offices.
RSV VACCINE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN (Abrysvo)	A one-time vaccine to protect infants from severe RSV illness by passing protection (antibodies) from mother to infant.	Women who are 32–36 weeks pregnant during RSV season who have not previously received an RSV vaccine while pregnant.	RSV can cause infants and young children to be ill, hospitalized, and even die.	September through January.	Health departments, pharmacies, and medical offices.
RSV ANTIBODY IMMUNIZATION FOR INFANTS (Nirsevimab)	An antibody immunization (not a vaccine) that provides protection (antibodies) to protect infants from severe RSV.	• All infants less than 8 months of age if mother didn't receive the RSV vaccine while pregnant. • Children aged 8–19 months who are at increased risk for severe illness.	These immunizations will provide protection against RSV for the infant.	• October is the best time to get it. • It can still provide protection if received later in RSV season through March.	Health departments, medical offices, and birthing hospitals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION In many cases, these vaccines can be given at the same time. If you have questions, talk with a healthcare provider, pharmacist, or your local health department vdh.virginia.gov/health-department-locator. Visit VDH Respiratory Diseases Webpage: vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/respiratory-diseases-in-virginia/

Last updated 09/2024

COVID-19 Testing

Testing

VDH COVID-19 Testing Team provides free antigen OTC COVID-19 tests to various facilities across Virginia

- You can check with your local health department to see if they have tests available for community partners
- The VDH Testing Locator helps find the nearest locations offering tests
- Expiration date information for at-home COVID-19 tests: OTC COVID-19 Diagnostic Tests and Expiration Dates
- The federal government will provide 4 free COVID-19 tests to households starting at the end of September, for more information visit COVIDtests.gov

Respiratory Immunizations Update

Respiratory Immunizations

Fall and Winter Immunization Guide

COVID-19 and Flu Updated 2024-25 Vaccines

Everyone 6 months and older

RSV Immunization to Protect Babies

Vaccine
Pregnant parents during weeks 32-36 of pregnancy during RSV season

OR

Monoclonal Antibodies
Babies entering or born during the RSV season

RSV Vaccine for Older Adults
(currently, older adults only need to get the RSV vaccine once; not annually)

People ages 60 and over at high risk of severe RSV

AND

Everyone ages 75 and older

cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/immunizations.html

CDC

Respiratory Treatments

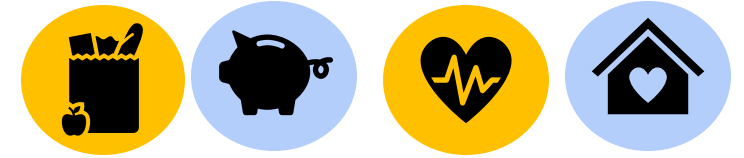
COVID-19 and Flu Treatments

- Flu and COVID-19 antiviral treatments are available to certain individuals to prevent severe illness. In general, this includes:
 - Older adults
 - People with weakened immune systems
 - People with certain underlying health conditions
- Treatment is most effective when started as possible after symptoms start, ideally:
 - Flu: within two days
 - COVID-19: within five to seven days
- For more information, consult with your healthcare provider

Care Resource Coordination



Care Resource Coordination



- The goal of the CRC Program is to **connect** people impacted by respiratory illnesses to local resources.
 - This program operates on a **local level**. Program availability may vary by health district.
- A Care Resource Coordinator may connect people with local resources, such as food assistance and benefits navigation
- Visit the [CRC webpage](#) to learn more and navigate to your local health department.
- If you have any questions, email COVIDcontainment@vdh.virginia.gov.

How Can Unite Us Help Community Based Organizations or Faith Networks?

- Easily locate and send referrals to local community services
- Measure organizations impact in your community
- Use of the online platform at no cost to most nonprofits and community organizations



Is Unite Us a Good Fit?

Want more information?

Scan the QR code below and fill out a brief survey. A member of the Unite Virginia team will be in touch with next steps!



Thank you!