



Respiratory Season Toolkit for Health Care Providers





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Patient education and outreach tools

Your patients trust you to provide accurate information on staying healthy and protected against respiratory illnesses. Stay updated by regularly reviewing [state respiratory virus surveillance](#) and [vaccination information](#). Remind your patients that it is never too late to get a respiratory illness vaccine.

General

- DHS offers free printable communications resources on [Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\)](#), [COVID-19](#), and [influenza](#). Check out the DHS [Respiratory Viruses](#) webpage for more information about respiratory viruses.
- Print a free educational [DHS fact sheet \(PDF\)](#) for the general public in multiple languages on the different types of respiratory viruses, including symptoms, diagnosis, and prevention.
- Use [trivia questions](#) from the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia on TVs in your waiting room or upload to your website.
- Looking for other resources or posters? Check out the [DHS Influenza Prevention](#) webpage, Families Fighting Flu's [free resources](#), or the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's [education resources](#).
- Use the sample posts in this toolkit on your social media channels.

Vaccines and misinformation

- The American Academy of Pediatrics has a [Recommended Childhood and Adolescent Immunization Schedule: United States, 2026: Policy Statement](#), as well as [discussion guides](#) for various populations about vaccines.
- The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists created an [infographic](#) on vaccines during pregnancy as well as [vaccine safety videos](#) for pregnant people.
- Use the script on **page 8** of this toolkit to guide conversations with vaccine hesitant patients, parents, or guardians.



Sample press release

This is a sample press release template for local health care providers, health departments, and Tribal health directors in Wisconsin. We encourage you to modify the template to meet the needs of your jurisdiction.

For Immediate Release

Date: [xx-xx-xxxx]

Don't let Respiratory Viruses Change Your Plans—Protect Yourself and Get Vaccinated

As respiratory illness season arrives, public health officials encourage you to protect yourself and your family by getting a yearly flu and COVID-19 vaccine. Vaccines are the best way to protect against serious respiratory disease. You can get both vaccines for as long as the diseases are spreading. Certain groups, like older adults, pregnant people, and babies may need a respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) immunization. Check with your health care provider. It is never too late to get vaccinated.

Don't let respiratory viruses derail your plans this season. Taking a few minutes to get vaccinated can help protect you and your loved ones from being sick, including missing school or work. A small step today can keep you healthy and present for the things that really matter.

"Getting vaccinated protects ourselves and our loved ones from respiratory illnesses, reduce hospitalizations and death, and keep our communities safer," said [insert name of local health department]. "It's the best way to protect against serious disease and make sure you don't miss out on holidays, important events, or daily activities like school or work."

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services recommends everyone ages 6 months and older gets a yearly flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a flu and COVID-19 vaccine is especially important for people at higher risk for serious disease complications, including:

- People who are pregnant.
- Young children.
- People 65 years and older, especially those living in group settings.
- People with certain medical conditions, such as asthma or heart disease.

Everyone 75 years and older and people aged 50–74 who are at [higher risk](#) for severe RSV should talk to their doctor about getting an RSV vaccine. This approved

RSV vaccine can protect older adults against serious RSV complications, especially those living in group settings. Parents of infants and children under two are also encouraged to talk with their child's pediatrician about receiving one dose of a monoclonal antibody to prevent severe illness from RSV.

Health care providers in [insert your jurisdiction name] are making sure that you can get vaccinated in a safe and convenient way. You can get a yearly flu vaccine at [list any known flu vaccine sites in your jurisdiction] and a yearly COVID-19 vaccine at [list any known COVID-19 vaccine sites in your jurisdiction]. If you are over the age of 75, you can get an RSV vaccine at your doctor's office or local pharmacy. Please check with your health insurance plan about any costs associated with each vaccine. If you don't have insurance, check with [insert name of free vaccine clinics in your jurisdiction].

Getting vaccinated is one of the best ways to stay healthy and prevent getting sick with respiratory illnesses like the flu, COVID-19, and RSV. You can safely get your yearly flu vaccine, COVID-19 vaccine, and RSV vaccine at the same time. Call a doctor or other health care provider today to make vaccine appointments for yourself and your family. If the cost of the vaccine is a concern, you or your [children](#) may be eligible for [free or lower-cost vaccines](#) [or insert your local vaccine program information].

In addition to getting vaccinated, you can stay up to date on current respiratory activity levels throughout the year on the [DHS Respiratory Virus Data webpage](#).



Sample social media

Use these downloadable social media graphics and suggested captions to promote respiratory virus vaccination in your community.

Timeframe	Graphic	Suggested caption
Early fall	 Friends don't let friends get sick. Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds to prevent disease. Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze. Download here	Friends don't let friends get sick—they get vaccinated and practice healthy hygiene to prevent respiratory viruses.

Early/mid Fall	 Save time and increase protection. You can get your flu and COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit.  Download here	Getting vaccinated is easier than you think! You can get your flu and COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit. It saves you time and increases your protection against disease.
Fall	 Protection from parent to child. Getting the RSV vaccine while pregnant can protect your baby against RSV for up to 6 months after birth.  Download here	Did you know you can pass your protection against respiratory viruses to your baby by getting vaccinated? Schedule a vaccine appointment with your health care provider.

Winter	 Don't let respiratory viruses interfere with your plans. Everyone 6 months and older can get a COVID-19 and flu vaccine.  Download here	Don't let respiratory viruses change your plans. Getting vaccinated against respiratory viruses keeps you healthy and active all season long.
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Talking to patients about vaccines

Use the guide to help navigate conversations with patients who are hesitant about vaccines.

1.

Acknowledge their concerns.

First, tell your patient you understand that they have questions. You don't have to agree with their views, but it's important to provide a safe space to ask questions.

I'm here to make sure you feel comfortable about your health care decisions.

2.

Invite them to share.

Ask your patient to share more about their feelings and beliefs toward vaccines and listen empathetically.

What have you been hearing about vaccines?

3.

Offer information from trusted sources.

Offering information might make your patient more willing to listen than giving it to them without asking. Share data from reputable organizations like the **American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, or Association of Obstetrician and Gynecologists.**

Would it be helpful to talk through the vaccine safety process?

4.

Give a strong recommendation.

Reaffirm your recommendation for vaccines. Most people get vaccines because their doctor tells them they need to, so frame vaccination as a routine and essential health behavior, like taking prescribed medication, getting enough physical activity, or maintaining a healthy diet.

You/your child needs this vaccine to lower your risk of getting seriously sick.