



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Cortland County Health Department

CORTLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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TO: Local Media

FROM: Nicole Anjeski, Public Health Director, Cortland County Health Department

RE: Increase in RSV, Flu and ongoing cases of COVID-19

DATE: 11/16/2022

The Cortland County Health Department is alerting the community of an increase in RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), flu cases and the ongoing cases of COVID-19 and providing guidance to residents to protect themselves and others within the community. With colder temperatures here and in conjunction with the holiday season, more people will be gathering often indoors and with many people, and this can result in the spread of respiratory illnesses.

Key prevention tips to limit the spread of these respiratory illnesses:

- **Avoid close contact**
 - Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- **Stay home when you are sick**
 - If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.
- **Cover your mouth and nose**
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Respiratory viruses like Flu, COVID and RSV viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with respiratory illnesses cough, sneeze or talk.
- **Clean your hands**
 - Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth**
 - Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Practice other good health habits**
 - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

[RSV \(respiratory syncytial virus\)](#) is a highly contagious, common respiratory virus that commonly causes mild cold-like symptoms in older children and adults. While most people recover from RSV within 1-2 weeks, RSV can become severe, especially for infants and older adults. RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis



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(inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children younger than 1 year of age in the United States.

Symptoms of mild RSV are similar to those of the common cold, flu and COVID, and include runny nose, coughing, sneezing, fever, wheezing, and decrease in appetite. These symptoms usually appear in stages and not all at once. In very young infants with RSV, the only symptoms may be irritability, decreased activity, and breathing difficulties.

Call your healthcare provider if you or your child are having difficulty breathing, not drinking enough fluids, or experiencing worsening symptoms. Some people with RSV infection, especially older adults and infants younger than 6 months of age, may need to be hospitalized and receive oxygen if they are having trouble breathing or are dehydrated.

In addition, the [flu \(influenza\)](#) is also spreading in our community and vaccination against flu is essential at this time of the year. Flu vaccines are available at many locations throughout our community, including healthcare provider offices and pharmacies. **Everyone 6 months of age and over should be vaccinated every year against the flu.**

Vaccination is the best protection against getting the flu — it protects not only you but also limits the spread of flu to your loved ones and others. The flu can make even healthy people very sick and cause serious complications in children younger than 5, pregnant women, people 65 years and older, and people with certain chronic health conditions.

Nicole Anjeski, Public Health Director stated, “The Cortland County Health Department encourages everyone to do their part in limiting the spread of respiratory illnesses like RSV, the flu and COVID-19 so that we can protect our most vulnerable community members. Getting vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19 (these vaccines are safe and effective, and the best protection against severe illness, hospitalization and death), staying home when you are feeling ill, getting tested if you have symptoms and wearing a mask when necessary are steps we can all take to limit the spread of these viruses.”

To get a flu or COVID-19 vaccine, call your primary care provider or schedule with a local pharmacy. You can also use the [Vaccine Finder](#) to find a location near you.