

# MEDIA RELEASE

ERIE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 20, 2024

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## Back-to-school Health Reminders

Erie, PA – As the school year is about to begin, the Erie County Department of Health reminds and encourages all residents of Erie County to stay updated with their flu, COVID-19 and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccinations.

The flu and COVID-19 viruses are always changing. Getting an updated vaccine helps protect against new virus variants and extends the vaccine's effectiveness.

The benefit of vaccination is that it helps the body against severe illness and lessens the likelihood of hospitalization. Getting the COVID-19 vaccination can help the body avoid developing long covid.

For questions and facts about vaccines, consult your doctor or primary healthcare provider.

### Preventing the spread of disease

Prevent the spread of diseases:

- Wash hands regularly; clean surfaces and doorknobs
- Do not share personal items such as eating or drinking utensils, toothbrushes, and towels.
- Cover mouth when coughing and sneezing with tissue or elbow
- Open windows for additional ventilation when possible
- If you are (or live, work or have contact with someone who is) at high risk for severe illness or have a weak immune system, consider using masks indoors and at gatherings
- To protect people who are weaker, consider testing before attending indoor gatherings. Test results can help you make healthier decisions and actions.

### What to do if you feel sick or have symptoms

The flu, COVID-19 and RSV are caused by viruses that can be can spread through coughing, sneezing or even just talking. Symptoms can include cough, runny nose, sore throat, fever, chills, fatigue (tiredness), and headache.

For adults and children, if you have symptoms of any of these diseases, **stay home** and stay away from others (including people you live with who are not sick). You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both your symptoms are getting better overall and you have no fever without using medicine.

Those who develop a fever or start feeling ill again after going back to normal activities should contact their doctor or primary healthcare provider.

Remember, even if you start to feel better, you may still be able to spread the virus that made you sick. If you do not have symptoms but have tested positive for a virus, you may be contagious. Follow the reminders above.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to follow these reminders for their children to help prevent the spread of disease to other children and staff at schools and childcare facilities. For more guidance, visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/precautions-when-sick.html>

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