

Are we facing a “triple-demic”? Suggested talking points

- **This year’s flu season is expected to be more severe than usual. Get a flu shot ASAP.**
 - Flu cases are rising earlier than expected, and flu-related hospitalizations [have not been this high](#) at this point in the season since 2010-2011.
 - Get your flu shot as soon as possible to lower the chance of severe infection and help reduce transmission. The CDC [recommends](#) everyone 6 months and older get the flu shot, with rare exceptions.
 - Make an appointment at a local [CVS](#) or [Walgreens](#), or use [this vaccine locator](#) to find a site near you. It is safe to get your flu shot and a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.
- **RSV cases are hospitalizing a record number of children.**
 - RSV, or [respiratory syncytial virus](#), is a common respiratory infection that can block airways. People at high risk for severe infection include infants and young children, older adults, and adults with chronic medical conditions.
 - This year, RSV cases are rising earlier than usual and causing more severe illness among kids.
 - [Weekly RSV cases](#) in October were at the highest levels seen in the last two years, and many children’s hospitals and pediatric intensive care units [are now at or past capacity](#).
 - There is no RSV vaccine yet, so the best way to prevent transmission is to wear masks, wash your hands, and stay home if sick.
- **Get an updated COVID-19 booster to help prevent a “triple-demic” of flu, RSV, and COVID-19 this winter.**
 - Nationwide COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations remain stable, but some Southwest states, including [Arizona](#), [Nevada](#), and [New Mexico](#), are seeing concerning trends.
 - New Omicron subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1 have been rising quickly, [now making up 27 percent](#) of circulating COVID-19 viruses.
 - A combination of waning COVID-19 immunity, lack of exposure to other respiratory viruses, and more indoor gatherings could fuel a “triple-demic” of all three viruses this winter.
 - States are no longer enforcing COVID-19 guidelines like masking and social distancing, so it’s crucial to take your own precautions: Get your flu shot and updated COVID-19 booster, wear masks in high-risk situations, stay home when sick, and wash your hands regularly.

Are we facing a “tripledeemic”? Frequently asked questions

1. Why are experts warning of a “tripledeemic”?

The U.S. is seeing an early rise in both flu and RSV cases, indicating potentially severe seasons for both respiratory viruses. If surges in flu and RSV cases coincide with another COVID-19 wave, we could experience a “tripledeemic” of respiratory infections that overwhelms hospital systems and causes excess deaths. Already, flu and RSV are [hospitalizing a record number of children](#) across the country. Nationwide COVID-19 case and hospitalization numbers remain stable at the moment, but some Southwest states are seeing concerning trends. New Omicron subvariants BQ.1 and BQ.1.1—which [now make up 27 percent](#) of circulating COVID-19 viruses—have also been ringing alarm bells over their quick spread.

2. Why are flu and RSV cases higher than usual this year?

Since the pandemic began, most people have engaged in some COVID-19 prevention measures, including social distancing and mask wearing. As a result, fewer people have gotten sick from or been exposed to other diseases such as the flu and RSV. Now, these non-COVID-19 viruses are returning as kids go back to in-person learning and social activities resume in full force. Experts believe that this year’s flu and RSV seasons may be more severe because many people, especially young kids, have not developed the typical baseline immunity against these diseases over the last few years.

3. How can I protect myself and my family this winter?

Since states are no longer enforcing COVID-19 guidelines like masking and social distancing, it’s crucial to take your own precautions. Safety measures include getting your flu shot and updated COVID-19 booster, wearing masks in high-risk situations, staying home when sick, and washing your hands regularly. If you or your child is struggling to breathe, seek medical attention immediately.