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 TO: Grant Co. Healthcare & Grant Co.
 Media

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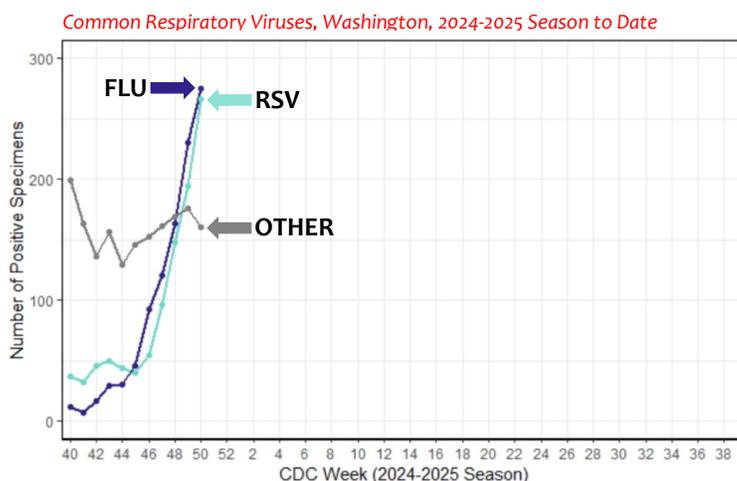
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2024/2025 Respiratory Illness Season Has Arrived in Grant County

GRANT COUNTY, WA – The Grant County Health Officer, Dr. Alexander Brzezny, has announced the official start of the 2024/2025 respiratory virus season. Influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity in Grant County and across the region has been increasing and recently exceeded respiratory illness seasonal thresholds. COVID-19 activity has remained below the threshold.

This respiratory illness season, take extra steps to keep you and your loved ones healthy and safe. Practice good hand hygiene, stay home when you are sick and talk to your doctor about COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines.

Healthcare facilities should begin implementing enhanced measures to reduce the spread of respiratory viruses. This may include patient screening and the use of face masks in healthcare facilities.



Current Situation

To date, three (3) flu-associated deaths have been reported in Washington state. No flu-associated deaths have been reported in Grant County this season. Most areas of the country are experiencing a steady increase in influenza-like illness activity. RSV and flu have been the fastest-rising viruses in Washington for several weeks.

[Stay up to date with respiratory virus trends in Grant County.](#)

COVID-19, Flu and RSV: Symptoms and Testing

COVID-19, flu, and RSV are all caused by different viruses. However, they spread in very similar ways and can have similar symptoms. [Learn about common symptoms for each respiratory virus.](#)

If you have symptoms of COVID or the flu, you can take an at-home test or talk to your doctor. You can get free COVID-19 tests at GCHD’s office or [order them for free online](#). Testing for RSV can be done by your healthcare provider.

Vaccines

It is not too late to get your COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines. Symptoms and outcomes of these illnesses vary for everyone and can be more serious than you might expect. Vaccines can help reduce your chance of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Talk to your doctor or review trusted resources to feel more confident in your vaccine decision.

Vaccines are available in various locations, including doctor’s offices and pharmacies. Find locations with COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccine [here](#).

Available Vaccine	Who Should Get Vaccinated
COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone 6 months and older should get the updated 2024/25 COVID-19 vaccine People 65 years and older and those who are moderately or severely immunocompromised should receive a second dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine six months after their first dose People who are immunocompromised may be eligible for extra doses
Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone 6 months older should get the flu shot Children 6 months through 8 years of age need either 1 or 2 doses of influenza vaccine Children 6 months through 8 years getting vaccinated for the first time, or who have only previously received 1 dose of flu vaccine in the past, should get 2 doses this season
RSV	<p><u>RSV Vaccine:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone 75 and older People ages 60 and over who are high risk of RSV Pregnant people during 32 to 36 weeks of pregnancy can get the vaccine to protect their baby <p><u>Monoclonal Antibodies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Babies born during RSV season

More Ways to Stay Healthy

In addition to the vaccines, you can help keep your family and others healthy by:

- Washing your hands often
- Staying home if you are sick
- Wearing a mask if you have symptoms and must go out

Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance

If you test positive for a respiratory virus, it is important to take steps to help prevent the spread of the virus. In March 2024, COVID-19 guidance was updated to align with other common respiratory viruses. If you have a respiratory virus stay home and away from others until both of the following have been true for at least 24 hours:

- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and

- You have not had a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

When you go back to your normal activities, wear a protective mask and take added precautions for an additional 5 days.

Treatment

Antivirals are prescription medicines that can fight flu and COVID-19 viruses. Antivirals must be prescribed to you by a healthcare provider. It is very important that antiviral drugs are started as soon as possible to treat patients who are at [higher risk of serious complications or very sick with the flu](#). If your doctor prescribes antiviral medication, finish the entire prescription.

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