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TO: Grant Co. Media & Grant Co.
Healthcare

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CDC: Updated Respiratory Illness Recommendations for the General Public

CDC releases simplified isolation guidelines for common respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Washington State Dept of Health is reviewing the updated guidelines.

GRANT COUNTY, WA – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released [updated guidance](#) for the general public that combines and simplifies best practices for preventing common respiratory illnesses. The new recommendations replace previous illness-specific guidance, such as isolation requirements exclusively related to COVID-19. **The Washington State Department of Health is in the process of reviewing the updated guidance and has not yet endorsed the changes.** Grant County Health District (GCHD) will wait to adopt these changes until DOH’s endorsement of the guidance has been announced.

This new guidance **DOES NOT** apply to healthcare settings. People who are staying or working in a healthcare facility should still follow the guidance in COVID-19 Infection Prevention in Healthcare Settings by WA DOH and any other guidance specific to their healthcare organization and setting. CDC continues to offer separate, specific guidance for healthcare settings ([COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [general infection prevention and control](#)).

The new CDC guidance provides a breakdown of ‘core strategies’ and ‘additional strategies’ that are proven to help protect against common respiratory viruses.

New General Public Isolation Guidelines – CDC now recommends the following isolation guidelines for respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19:

You may return to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:

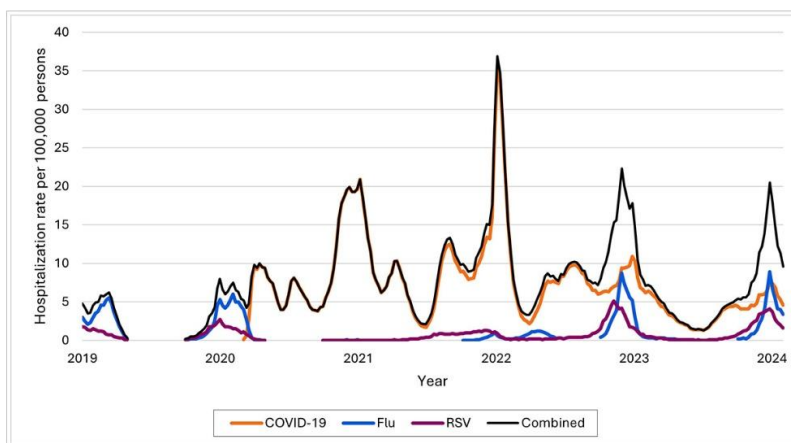
- Your symptoms are getting better overall, and
- You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).

When you return to your normal activities, take added precautions over the next 5 days, such as improving ventilation, using good hygiene such as washing your hands and covering your cough/sneeze, wearing protective masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors.

People with a recent COVID infection who do not require medical attention should avoid areas and places where vulnerable people are present (nursing homes, hospitals, clinics, elder homes, older family members, pregnant women or those with abnormal immune systems), usually for about 10 days after diagnosis.

If you develop a fever or you start to feel worse after you returned to normal activities, stay home and away from others again until, for at least 24 hours, both are true: your symptoms are improving overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication). Then take added precautions for the next 5 days. **These changes do not apply to healthcare settings.**

COVID-19 hospitalizations have been declining year-over-year since 2022, with winter peaks more closely resembling those of influenza



[Background for CDC's Updated](#)

[Respiratory Virus Guidance](#) – CDC

summarized the reasons for these changes in a release on March 1st, 2024. “COVID-19 remains an important public health threat, but it is no longer the emergency that it once was, and its health impacts increasingly resemble those of other

respiratory viral illnesses, including influenza and RSV”. (CDC, March 2024). CDC also states, “Weekly hospital admissions for COVID-19 have decreased by more than 75% and deaths by more than 90% compared to January 2022, the peak of the initial Omicron wave”.

COVID-19 Vaccine Updates – It's important we continue to use the tools we have to help keep everyone safe. Everyone aged 5 years and older should get **1 dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine** to protect against serious illness from COVID-19. **An [additional COVID-19 vaccine](#) dose is now recommended for adults 65 years or older at least 4 months following their last dose.**

COVID-19 vaccination reduces the risk of severe illness and hospitalization by about 50% compared to people not up to date on vaccination. GCHD recommends that those who are eligible stay up to date on their COVID-19 vaccine by receiving an additional dose. [Click here to find COVID-19 vaccine near you.](#)

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