



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

Date: September 17, 2026

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Respiratory Virus Season Guidance for Healthcare

As we enter respiratory virus season, we're sharing guidance about vital vaccine protections for our community, including healthcare workers.

Vaccine recommendations for healthcare workers

There is no local order requiring vaccination or masking during flu season among healthcare workers. However, influenza and COVID-19 vaccination remain strongly encouraged, and we encourage employers—especially acute care settings such as hospitals and long-term care facilities—to continue requiring employees in patient care to be vaccinated.

Healthcare workers are encouraged to receive the updated 2025-26 influenza and COVID-19 vaccines by the beginning of influenza season, which runs November through April. It takes about two weeks for vaccines to provide their full protection. Employers are encouraged to maintain vaccine policies and make vaccination convenient for employees, such as by offering vaccines on-site during work hours. These measures help protect patients and healthcare workers during a time when illness and community demand for care can strain healthcare capacity.

Vaccine recommendations for patients

Vaccines remain available for at-risk groups and those choosing to reduce their risk of severe illness. Californians can access [vaccine recommendations for the 2026-27 respiratory virus season \(PDF\)](#) and other up to date recommendations on the [CDPH Vaccines for All webpage](#). All vaccines recommended by the California Department of Public Health continue to be covered by health insurance regulated in California.

Age/Condition	COVID-19	Influenza	RSV
Children	• All 6–23 months • All 2–18 years with risk factors or never vaccinated against COVID-19 • All who are in close contact with others with risk factors¹ • All who choose to reduce risk of severe illness	• All 6 months and older²	• All younger than 8 months³ • All 8-19 months with risk factors
Pregnancy	• All who are planning pregnancy, pregnant or postpartum	• All who are planning pregnancy, pregnant or postpartum	• All who are 32-36 weeks gestational age^{3, 4}
Adults	• All 65 years and older • All 19–64 years with risk factors • All who are in close contact with others with risk factors¹ • All who choose to reduce risk of severe illness	• All	• All 75 years and older⁴ • All 50–74 years with risk factors⁴
Healthcare Workers	• All	• All	• All who meet criteria above



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Healthcare providers play a critical role in helping inform and educate patients about influenza and COVID-19 vaccination, dispelling rumors, and providing information about vaccine safety and effectiveness. If you would like print or digital educational materials for your clinics, please contact Public Health at 805-781-5500.

A new [fact sheet](#) shares recommendations for COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccination for patients, all in one place. It was created by the American Medical Association in alignment with the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and others.

Respiratory Virus Immunization Recommendations		
ALIGNED WITH EVIDENCE AND GUIDANCE FROM: 		
Influenza (flu)	Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	COVID-19
Children and Adolescents 0-18 years Annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months +	Pregnancy Annual flu vaccine (several nasal spray flu vaccines) One-time RSV vaccine in first eligible pregnancy if 32-36 weeks pregnant, given between September 1 and March 1	All young children ages 6-23 months and children 2-18 years in certain risk groups or if desired Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine
Adults 19-64 years Annual flu vaccine for all adults ages 19+	One-time RSV vaccine for adults ages 50-74 at increased risk of severe RSV Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine	
Older Adults 65+ years Annual flu vaccine for all adults; enhanced flu vaccine (high-dose, adjuvanted, recombinant, or mRNA) for 65+, if possible One-time RSV vaccine recommended for adults ages 50-74 at increased risk and all adults age 75+	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine for adults 65+, followed by a second dose 6 months later to boost protection	
Immunocompromised Annual flu vaccine for those ages 6 months (several nasal spray flu vaccines) Single dose of RSV vaccine for those ages 18 years and for those ages 18 years; administration should be guided by shared decision making	Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine for those ages 18 months	
Healthcare Personnel Annual flu vaccine	Follow age- and risk-based RSV vaccine recommendations Annual updated COVID-19 vaccine	

Infection prevention reminders

This is an important season to re-emphasize the importance of foundational infection prevention measures in addition to vaccination. **Handwashing** and good **ventilation** are especially key this time of year. Employers are asked to remind employees to stay home when sick with a respiratory or gastrointestinal illness (regardless of the cause) and to mask diligently if they must provide patient care while experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness. As with vaccines, our Public Health team is available to provide information and printed materials focused on these measures; please contact us if you would like our assistance.

Treatment

Treatment for influenza and COVID-19 has become readily available and is used more frequently, especially by people at higher risk. Thank you for continuing to connect patients with nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (**Paxlovid™**) for COVID-19 and oseltamivir (**Tamiflu™**) for influenza treatment when indicated.

Local respiratory virus surveillance data

The Department of Public Health provides ongoing wastewater surveillance data for influenza, COVID-19, and RSV from six sites around SLO County, along with data on test positivity and vaccinations. Find updated data at www.slocounty.gov/virus-data.

Thank you for your help protecting the health of our community and medical workers.