



Protect yourself and others from Flu, RSV, and COVID-19

Currently, respiratory illnesses are widespread in Georgia. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Georgia currently has some of the highest rates of flu cases and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in children. The CDC and other public health officials are encouraging everyone to protect themselves and prevent the spread of flu and respiratory illnesses. The following is information about the flu, RSV, and other respiratory illnesses and preventive measures to take to protect yourself and others.

Flu symptoms and their intensity can vary from person to person and can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. If you think you have the flu or any serious respiratory illness, call or visit your healthcare provider.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a highly contagious virus that affects people of all ages but is most severe in young children and older adults. In otherwise healthy children, RSV symptoms may look like a common cold and include congestion or runny nose, cough, and fever. Symptoms of an RSV infection usually last about a week but, in some cases, can last longer. According to Andi Shane, MD, MPH, Medical Director of Infectious Diseases at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, “The virus spreads easily by contact with droplets from sneezing or coughing and droplets on unwashed hands, countertops, crib rails, and toys.” Parents and caregivers should watch for symptoms of a runny nose and cough that turn into more serious breathing issues. If symptoms progress, contact your child’s doctor immediately. RSV can become more than a cold, and knowing the warning signs can be lifesaving.

The following are recommended preventive actions you can take every day to help prevent the spread of Flu, RSV, and COVID-19:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses that cause flu.
- For [flu](#), the CDC recommends that people stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone except to get medical care or other necessities. The fever should be gone without the need to use a fever-reducing medicine.
 - Everyone 6 months and older should get an annual flu vaccine, ideally by the end of October but people should continue to get vaccinated if flu viruses pose a threat to their community.
 - Vaccination of people at higher risk of developing serious flu complications is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.
 - People at higher risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant people, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease, and people 65 years and older.
- For COVID-19, the CDC recommends if you have symptoms, stay home, get tested, and seek treatment (if needed).
- Per the CDC: for the first time ever, safe, updated immunizations are available for all three major fall and winter respiratory diseases – flu, COVID-19, and RSV (for groups eligible for this vaccine).

To ensure the safety and health of students, staff, and parents, we encourage you to take these precautions. We believe by taking these preventive measures we can reduce the spread of flu and other communicable illnesses. The Office of District Health Services (DHS) team of Registered School Nurses and Clinic Assistants work diligently to adhere to district guidelines for reporting, managing, and helping prevent suspected and confirmed infectious illnesses. Additionally, DHS works closely with the Fulton County Board of Health to report any unusual or increased absences due to the flu/respiratory illness. For more information on the flu, RSV, and COVID-19, please contact your healthcare provider or the Fulton County Public Health at 770-520-7500.

Sources: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta

For more information and frequently asked questions about respiratory illness see the following links:

[Protect yourself from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect-yourself-from-covid-19-flu-and-rsv)

<https://www.choa.org/parent-resources/covid-19/difference-between-flu-covid19-cold-rsv>

If you need this document/information in a different language, please send an email to districtlanguageassistance@fultonschools.org or call 470-254-6827.