

## Protect yourself this fall and winter, says Peel Public Health

What you can do to stay healthy during the respiratory illness season.

As people move indoors, the risk of transmitting viruses like the flu, COVID-19 or respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) increases.

No one thing on its own is 100% effective at preventing the spread of respiratory infections but practicing public health measures provides the best protection. This includes:

Wash your hands often with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;

Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hand;

Stay home when sick, and if unable to stay at home, wear a mask and avoid vulnerable populations;

Consider wearing a mask indoors, especially in crowded spaces where you can't keep a safe and comfortable distance from others;

Get vaccinated and stay up to date with vaccinations.

Vaccines help lower the risk of infection, work to reduce severe outcomes if infected, and aid your body's natural defenses to develop protection against a disease.

About the vaccines

The COVID-19 and flu vaccines are free, safe, and effective ways to protect yourself, prevent severe illness, and are available for adults and children over six months of age.

Through the Ontario government's High-Risk Older Adults RSV Vaccine Program, adults 60 years or older residing in long term care homes, Elder Care Lodges, and some retirement homes may be eligible for the RSV vaccine, Arexvy. If adults 60 years or older don't qualify for the free RSV vaccine, they can still purchase the vaccine with a prescription from their family doctor or other primary care provider.