

Re: Staying Healthy this Holiday Season

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we approach the end of the year and more people gather indoors due to the cold weather and the holidays, respiratory viruses are on the rise and circulating in our communities. Influenza (flu), COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) are three respiratory viruses that can cause serious illness in some people.

### **Protect yourself and your loved ones**

Toronto Public Health (TPH) is reminding families of ways to reduce virus spread as we prepare for winter and the upcoming holiday break:

- Get vaccines you are eligible for as soon as possible at a participating [pharmacy](#) or your primary health care provider to help prevent serious illness.
- Wear a well-fitted, high-quality mask in indoor public settings if you are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- Stay home when sick or if you have symptoms of illness, even if they are mild.
- Before returning to school or work screen for symptoms of illness by using the provincial [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) or [TPH Screening Questionnaire](#).
- Wear a mask for 10 days after symptoms begin to protect others at home, school, and work.
- [Wash or sanitize your hands often](#).
- [Cover coughs and sneezes](#) with an elbow or a tissue.
- Clean high-touch surfaces often.

Visit [toronto.ca/RespiratoryViruses](https://toronto.ca/RespiratoryViruses) to learn more.

### **Find FREE rapid antigen tests near you**

Free rapid antigen tests are available at various City facilities across Toronto, including all Toronto Public Library branches. Visit [toronto.ca/COVID19Testing](https://toronto.ca/COVID19Testing) to find a location near you.

### **What to do if you or your child are sick**

Speak to your health care provider or call [Health811](#) if you have questions about your family's health or if you are unsure where to access care. If your child is sick, review this information about [how to care for them at home and when to seek medical care and information about fever and pain medications](#). The following virtual care clinics are available in Toronto:

- [Adult Virtual Care Clinic](#)
- [Pediatric Virtual Care Clinic](#)
- [Mental Health Virtual Care Clinic](#)

We can all take care of our families, school communities and health care system

capacity by reducing the spread of respiratory viruses.

### **Other Ways to Stay Healthy**

Visit [toronto.ca/health](https://toronto.ca/health) to learn more about:

- [Health Information for School Age Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Respiratory Viruses: Information for Parents and Caregivers](#)
- [Immunization](#)
- [Child Safety \(Injury Prevention\)](#)
- [Nutrition Tips for School-Aged Children and Youth](#)
- [Food Safety at Home](#)
- [Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Staying Healthy in Cold Weather](#)

Questions? Contact 416-338-7600 or [PublicHealth@toronto.ca](mailto:PublicHealth@toronto.ca).

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