

## COVID

Everyone 6 months and older should get an updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine. Nearly all MA residents can still get a COVID-19 vaccine for no or little cost.

Find a vaccine location near you

- Search [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)
- Visit a doctors' office, pharmacy, or health clinic in your community
- Find a local vaccine clinic through the [COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination Program](#)
- If you cannot get to a vaccine clinic, you may be able to [schedule an in-home vaccination](#)

[Search vaccines.gov](#) [Find a mobile vaccination clinic near you](#) [Learn about the in-home vaccination program](#)

## Vaccine doses

Recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses vary by age and immune status. Here are the [latest 2023-2024 recommendations](#) from the CDC:

- Everyone aged 5 years and older should get 1 dose of the updated 2023-2024 Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19
- People who are moderately or severely immunocompromised may get additional doses of updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine
- Children aged 6 months–4 years need multiple doses of COVID-19 vaccines to be up to date, including at least 1 dose of updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine

Ask your healthcare provider what COVID-19 vaccine dose is best for you and your family members.

# RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)

Respiratory syncytial (sin-SISH-uhl) virus, or RSV, is a **common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms**. RSV is on the rise in the Commonwealth, the Northeast and much of the United States. Public Health officials, including the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics, are urging parents and families to [take steps to prevent illness and stay healthy](#).

Most people recover from RSV in a week or two, but the virus can be serious, especially for infants and older adults. RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children younger than 1 year of age in the United States.

People infected with RSV usually show symptoms within 4 to 6 days after getting infected. Symptoms of RSV infection usually include

- Runny nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing

These symptoms usually appear in stages and not all at once. In very young infants with RSV, the only symptoms may be irritability, decreased activity, and breathing difficulties

Call your healthcare professional if you or your child is having difficulty breathing, not drinking enough fluids, or experiencing worsening symptoms.

## RSV and Serious Health Problems

RSV can also cause more severe infections such as bronchiolitis, an inflammation of the small airways in the lung, and pneumonia, an infection of the lungs. It is the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children younger than 1 year of age.

Healthy adults and infants infected with RSV do not usually need to be hospitalized. But some people with RSV infection, especially older adults and infants younger than 6 months of age, may need to be hospitalized if they are having trouble breathing or are dehydrated. In the most severe cases, a person may require additional oxygen or intubation (have a breathing tube inserted through the mouth and down to the airway) with mechanical ventilation (a machine to help a person breathe). In most of these cases, hospitalization only lasts a few days.

*CDC surveillance has shown an increase in RSV detections and RSV-associated emergency department visits and hospitalizations in multiple U.S. regions, with some regions nearing seasonal peak levels.*

### **New RSV shot recommendations:**

- Adults ages 60+ are advised to speak to a clinician about whether the new RSV vaccine is right for them.
- CDC recommends the new RSV shot for all babies younger than 8 months born during or entering their 1st RSV season AND babies 8-19 months who are at increased risk for severe RSV. Consult your medical provider for more information.
- Coming soon- CDC is expected to recommend a new vaccine for pregnant women to prevent RSV in their newborn infants. Check with your clinician for updated information.

<https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html>

# FLU MYTHS



# FLU FACTS

## MOST COMMON MYTHS SURROUNDING THE ANNUAL FLU VACCINE

MYTH: Vaccines are not proven to prevent the flu



FACT: You are at least 60% less likely to become infected with the influenza virus

MYTH: The flu vaccine can give me the flu



FACT: Flu viruses in flu shots are inactivated, so they cannot cause infection

MYTH: I should wait to get vaccinated so I'm covered until the end of the season



FACT: Get the vaccine as soon as possible. It takes 2 weeks for antibodies to develop

MYTH: The flu shot will protect me from every type of flu virus



FACT: The flu shot is designed yearly to protect against the highest risk/actively circulating strains of influenza

MYTH: I never get the flu. I do not need the flu shot



FACT: By getting the flu vaccine, you protect yourself and others because you are less likely to spread the flu