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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

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For Immediate Release

Don't Let Respiratory Viruses Stop You This Holiday Season DCHD Recommends Residents Get Their COVID-19 Booster and Flu Vaccine Ahead of Celebrations

DuPage County – DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) continues to recommend residents stay up to date with COVID-19 boosters and get the annual [influenza \(flu\) vaccine](#) to help them stay healthy while visiting family and friends during the holiday season. COVID-19 boosters and the flu vaccine are the best tools to protect yourself and your loved ones from becoming ill with these respiratory viruses. Getting vaccinated and boosted at least two weeks before a gathering or traveling gives your body time to build the immunity it needs to fight infection.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “cold and flu season is off to an earlier start than usual, with respiratory viruses like flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) on the rise, especially among children.”

In the past three weeks, six influenza intensive-care unit (ICU) hospitalizations among DuPage County residents have been reported, including three pediatric ICU hospitalizations reported in the past week. COVID-19 and flu vaccines are recommended for everyone aged 6 months and older. Vaccinations provide the best protection against serious illness and reduce the risk of death related to COVID-19 and the flu.

“The holiday season is rapidly approaching. We’ll soon be spending more time with our families and loved ones. Don’t let respiratory viruses like the flu or COVID-19 stop you. Get your COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine today,” advised Karen Ayala, Executive Director of DuPage County Health Department.

DCHD continues to offer free COVID-19 vaccines to individuals 6 months and older and bivalent COVID-19 boosters for those aged 5 years and up. To register for a vaccination appointment, please visit our [website](#) or call DCHD at (630) 682-7400. COVID-19 vaccinations are administered at our Central Public Health Center in Wheaton.

Additional opportunities to get COVID-19 vaccines, boosters, and flu vaccines are available in and around DuPage County through pharmacies and other medical providers—visit [vaccines.gov](#) to find a location near you. COVID-19 and flu vaccinations can be given at the same time. To help improve access, DuPage Health Coalition is offering free flu vaccine vouchers to uninsured DuPage County residents whose financial circumstances make it difficult to get their annual flu shot. More information is available at <https://accessdupage.org/flu/>

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Stop the flu, COVID-19, and other respiratory viruses with these [infection prevention tips](#):

- Get the annual flu shot.
- Get your COVID-19 shots and [stay up to date](#) with boosters.
- Stay home when sick.
- Wear a mask or respirator to protect yourself and those around you. Wear a mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you.
- Avoid close contact with persons who are ill.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- Talk to your doctor about medication for flu and COVID-19.

Residents can also use the [COVID-19 Community Levels](#) to help make an informed decision about what steps to take. Additional information on flu prevention is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/index.html>

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