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Contact:

Sarah Seifert
Communication Specialist, Eau Claire City-County Health Department
715-559-9602
Sarah.Seifert@eauclairecounty.gov

Get your flu shot this fall to protect yourself and your community

Be aware of flu, RSV, and COVID-19 as colder weather approaches

Eau Claire, October 26, 2023 — Each fall and winter, cases of respiratory illnesses increase. To be prepared and protected as possible, get your flu shot now.

Contact your doctor's office or a local pharmacy to schedule an appointment to get the flu shot – or visit [vaccines.gov/flu](https://www.vaccines.gov/flu) to search for other vaccinators. The CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get a flu shot. They are especially important for older adults, people with chronic health conditions, people who are pregnant, and young children. You can safely receive your flu shot and your fall COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.

We should prepare for the flu, RSV, COVID, and other respiratory viruses to circulate this fall and/or winter, says Kristy Polden, public health nurse at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

“It takes about two weeks after getting a flu or COVID shot for your body to build up defenses against infection, so getting those vaccines now can help protect you later this season,” Polden says. “Getting vaccinated for the flu and COVID doesn't just boost your own protection from getting seriously ill, it means people close to you may also be better protected from those viruses as well.”

Symptoms of the flu, COVID, and RSV are similar and may include fever, congestion, runny nose, cough, and/or a sore throat. Click for more information on symptoms of the [flu](#), [COVID](#), and [RSV](#).

New tools available to combat RSV

RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) usually causes mild cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can cause serious illness in some cases, especially for babies and older adults. This fall two new tools to reduce the spread of RSV are available to the public: A new RSV vaccine for adults 60 and older, and an RSV antibody treatment for infants. Contact your doctor to discuss if the vaccine or antibody treatment are recommended for you or your child.

In addition to getting up to date on your vaccines, here's how you can avoid getting sick or spreading a respiratory illness to others:

- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.**
- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Stay home when sick.**
- If you have symptoms of a respiratory illness, **ask your doctor about getting tested for COVID and the flu.** Because the flu, RSV, and COVID have similar symptoms, it is very difficult to know which virus you have without testing. Find a local COVID testing location by clicking [here](#).