



**Department
of Health**

**Office for
the Aging**

February 2, 2024

Dear Local Health Departments, Area Agencies on Aging, Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities:

Older adults remain at heightened risk of severe illness due to respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), flu, and COVID-19 this winter season. As the local authorities responsible, in part, for public health and community-based supports for older adults, your agency plays a vital role in helping older New Yorkers get vaccinated and protected from these respiratory illnesses.

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) offer the following information and resources to assist in your efforts to encourage older adults to obtain all three vaccines, as appropriate and in consultation with an individual's doctor/health care provider.

Background

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently alerted health care providers of the urgent need to increase vaccination rates for all three viruses. The federal agency is advising that low vaccine uptake, coupled with ongoing respiratory disease activity from these viruses, could lead to more and more severe cases and increase the strain on the health care system.

Co-administration of RSV, COVID-19 and Flu Vaccines

Individuals who are eligible can receive flu and the updated COVID-19 shot together, and adults 60 years and older, in consultation with their health care provider, can also receive the RSV vaccine, but should discuss getting all three at the same time with their health care provider.

Vaccine Eligibility

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the RSV vaccine for individuals 60 and over. Only one shot is needed.

The CDC recommends annual flu shots for everyone six months and older each flu season.

Individuals can receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine at any time and at least eight weeks after a prior COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Prior Infection and COVID-19 Vaccines

People with known current SARS-CoV-2 infection should defer any COVID-19 vaccination at least until recovery from the acute illness (if symptoms were present) and criteria to discontinue isolation have been met. People who recently had SARS-CoV-2 infection may consider delaying a COVID-19 vaccine dose by 3 months from symptom onset or positive test (if infection was asymptomatic).

Insurance Coverage

All three vaccines are covered by Medicaid for those enrolled. All three vaccines are also covered by Medicare. Flu and COVID-19 vaccines are covered by Medicare Part B. RSV is covered by Medicare Part D.

More Information and Resources

NYSDOH maintains several online resources that provide information about case counts, symptoms, prevention, diagnosis and more at the links below.

- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infection resources: https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/respiratory_syncytial_virus/
- COVID-19 resources: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>
- Seasonal Influenza resources: <https://health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/>

Please share this information with older adults in your community to encourage vaccination using all available outreach tools and efforts, including digital communications (through social media and other broadcasts), on home-delivered meal routes, during information and assistance contacts through New York Connects and the Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program, at public information sessions, and more.

NYSDOH and NYSOFA also encourage public health departments and Area Agencies on Aging to partner with area senior centers and assisted living facilities to host vaccination clinics. Please leverage all available local community resources to support older adults who may need assistance in scheduling and travel to vaccine appointments through existing agency supports for transportation and information and assistance.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James V. McDonald M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner
New York State Department of Health



Greg Olsen
Director
New York State Office for the Aging



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New York State Department of Health

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