

VACUNAS (VACCINES) UPDATE

National Alliance for Hispanic Health



RESPIRATORY VIRUS ACTIVITY REMAINS ELEVATED ACROSS U.S.



Respiratory virus activity, that includes the common cold, COVID-19, flu, and RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus), remains elevated across the United States [according to CDC data](#). As of January 22, 2025, Wisconsin, New Jersey, and New Hampshire are identified as having “very high” levels of respiratory illness activity in addition to eleven states (Texas, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Minnesota, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, and Connecticut) exhibiting “high” activity. Emergency department visit rates are currently “very high” for diagnosed influenza, “moderate” for RSV, and “low” for COVID-19. [Health experts recommend](#) that everyone take precautions such as frequent hand washing, masking in crowded places, and getting [vaccinated](#) against COVID-19 and flu. Separately, older adults, pregnant women, and infants should get vaccinated against RSV if they have not already done so. Preliminary CDC data on [COVID-19](#), [flu](#), and [RSV](#) show the estimated impact of respiratory viruses this season (from October 1, 2024 through January 11, 2025) to be 120,000-210,000 COVID-19 hospitalizations, 160,000-340,000 flu hospitalizations, and 76,000-160,000 RSV hospitalizations.

IN THIS ISSUE

Respiratory Virus Activity Remains Elevated Across U.S.

2024 COVID-19 Vaccination Rates Among Older Adults Increase from 2023

Health Survey Shows Rise in Perceived Effectiveness of RSV as Perceptions of Other Seasonal Vaccines Remain Unchanged

Health Officials State Risk of H5N1 Bird Flu Remains Low After First U.S. Death

Stanford Researchers Develop New Method for Influenza Vaccination to Increase Vaccine Effectiveness

It is critical to encourage family and friends to get vaccinated against the new strains of COVID-19 and flu, as well as RSV if eligible, to help protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Those with insurance can visit www.vaccines.gov to find a local pharmacy offering updated COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines. Individuals should contact their chosen pharmacy directly to confirm if vaccines are available and schedule appointments. For people without health insurance, some federally qualified health centers and local health departments still offer the COVID-19 vaccine for free or at a discount. Contact your local health center or health department to confirm availability. For more information or help finding a location offering vaccines, call the National Alliance for Hispanic Health's toll-free, bilingual Su Familia Helpline at 1-866-783-2645 or visit www.vacunashelp.org.

2024 COVID-19 VACCINATION RATES AMONG OLDER ADULTS INCREASE FROM 2023

[CDC data](#) show that as of January 4, 2025, 23% of adults 18 years and older had received one dose of the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 19% at the same time last year. The increase in vaccination rates is more pronounced with older adults as 46% of adults 65 years and older had received one dose of the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 33% at the same time last year. [Health experts note](#) there are several contributing factors including an increase in vaccine recommendations by healthcare providers to this population, as well as an increase in older adults receiving the COVID-19 and flu vaccines during the same pharmacy visit.



The vaccination trends in this report are good news for public health given the risk of death from COVID-19 for adults 75-84 years old is about [140 times higher](#) than for adults 18-29 years old. The [CDC recommends](#) a second dose of the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine for adults 65 years and older and individuals with moderately or severely weakened immune systems to be administered between two and six months after the first dose. It's not too late in the season for older adults to get the 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine to help protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

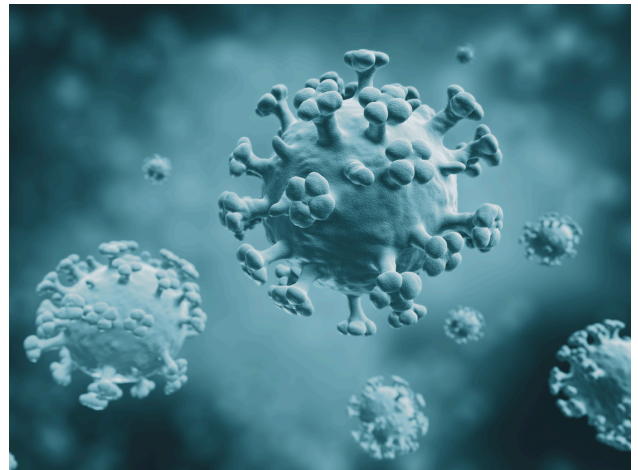
HEALTH SURVEY SHOWS RISE IN PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF RSV AS PERCEPTIONS OF OTHER SEASONAL VACCINES REMAIN UNCHANGED

A [nationally representative health survey](#) of 1,771 U.S. adults conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center in November 2024 showed that RSV vaccines to protect newborns and older adults are more widely perceived as effective, and that perceptions of their seasonal routine vaccinations have not changed. The survey showed that 52% of respondents think the maternal RSV vaccine is effective, up from 42% in October 2023, and 61% of respondents think the RSV vaccine for older adults is effective, up from 54% in October 2023. Seventy-five percent of respondents stated the flu vaccine is effective, 65% stated the COVID-19 vaccine is effective, and 71% stated the pneumonia vaccine is effective, all of which remain unchanged from October 2023. Respondents' views of effectiveness of other longstanding vaccines such as MMR, shingles, and HPV were also unchanged.

HEALTH OFFICIALS STATE RISK OF H5N1 BIRD FLU REMAINS LOW AFTER FIRST U.S. DEATH

The Louisiana Department of Health [reported](#) the first human death infected with H5N1 bird flu on January 6, 2025. The infected person was over 65 years old and had underlying medical conditions. Exposure to the virus occurred after encountering a flock of birds in their backyard believed to be carrying the bird flu virus that has been circulating in wild birds and poultry. [CDC officials noted](#) that a genetic analysis of the virus from the infected person found changes in its structure that could enhance its ability to potentially infect the upper airways of humans and help it spread more easily from person to person. These genetic changes were not seen in the virus from the birds the infected person had been exposed to, indicating that these changes developed in the infected person.

Despite the genetic changes identified in this particular case, health officials stated that their investigation found no person-to-person transmission of the virus and emphasized that the risk to most people remains low. Since early 2024, there have been [67 confirmed bird flu cases](#) in people in the U.S. Most human cases have occurred in agricultural workers and resulted in mild symptoms.



STANFORD RESEARCHERS DEVELOP NEW METHOD FOR INFLUENZA VACCINATION TO INCREASE VACCINE EFFECTIVENESS

[Stanford Medicine researchers have developed](#) a new method to make seasonal influenza vaccinations more effective and potentially protect against other emerging flu strains. The standard seasonal flu vaccine contains a mix of four commonly circulating influenza subtypes to protect individuals from whichever strain of flu they are exposed to. The effectiveness of the seasonal flu vaccine is not as high as it could be because vaccinated individuals typically fail to develop enough antibodies to each of the four subtypes represented in the vaccine. Most individuals only develop a strong immune response to one subtype and therefore are only adequately protected against one of the four strains. As detailed in the [December 19, 2024 edition of Science](#), researchers designed a method to construct flu vaccines that broadens the antibody response to all four common flu subtypes. By coupling antigens from multiple influenza subtypes, antibody and T cell responses are expanded which increases overall vaccine efficacy. The research team also showed that they could substantially boost an antibody response to bird flu in conjunction with the four seasonal influenza subtypes using their new vaccine design. These are promising results to combat seasonal influenza and emerging flu variants with pandemic potential.



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