

# Illinois' Overall Respiratory Virus Level Remains Flat

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ILLINOIS - Overall respiratory virus level remains at [Moderate](#) according to the latest CDC data, while COVID-19 hospitalizations have continued to decline in recent weeks, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reported today. The total number of COVID-19 hospitalizations declined 16% in the week ending March 9 and the state remains at Low level for COVID-19 hospitalizations, according to the [CDC COVID Data Tracker](#). The data showed that [two Illinois counties remained at Medium level](#) for COVID-19 hospitalizations, the same as the week before.

“COVID-19 hospitalizations are continuing to decline in Illinois,” said IDPH Director Dr. Sameer Vohra. “However, respiratory virus season is still upon us as flu continues to circulate. It is important to keep in mind that flu season can last until May. Please

continue to use all the tools available to keep yourself and your families safe and protected, especially those over 65, young children, and individuals who are immunocompromised.”

IDPH has endorsed the recommendation made in February by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for a second dose of the updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccines for those over 65 years of age. Those who are immunosuppressed remain eligible to receive additional doses 2 months after their previous dose. A [CDC presentation](#) that was provided for the ACIP meeting included preliminary data that showed that 96% of those hospitalized for COVID-19 in October and November 2023, had not received the updated Covid shot last fall.

If people do develop symptoms of a respiratory illness – including coughing, sneezing, sore throat, a runny nose or fever – IDPH recommends staying home and away from others to avoid spreading illness. If you need to seek medical care, you should wear a mask to limit the risk to others – or try to schedule a telehealth appointment. In addition, public health experts urge anyone who has been recently exposed to COVID-19 or other respiratory viruses to wear a mask when in crowded areas, and if visiting someone at high risk for severe disease. For more on when and where to use a mask, [click HERE](#).

With RSV season now winding down in Illinois, the use of the RSV vaccine in pregnancy is no longer warranted. However, the shots that can be used to provide infants and young children protective immunity to RSV will continue to be available until the end of the season, and older adults can continue to get their RSV vaccine even after the season is declared over.

To help keep the public informed about conditions around the state, IDPH recently launched an [Infectious Respiratory Disease Surveillance Dashboard](#) that is updated weekly on Fridays. This report provides the public the latest data on hospital visits, seasonal trends, lab test positivity and demographic data

Every household in the U.S. is eligible to receive four free at-home tests through the [COVID.gov](#) website. IDPH has also made available a single swab triple-test for Flu /RSV and COVID-19, at no cost, to high risk congregate care settings and local health departments.

For those who are uninsured or under-insured, the CDC launched the [Bridge Access Program](#) last year that covers the cost of COVID-19 vaccines. The [Vaccines for Children Program](#) covers all ACIP recommended vaccines for eligible children, including nirsevimab for RSV protection.

For treatment of COVID-19, Illinoisans who experience symptoms can access no cost-share telehealth services through the [SIU School of Medicine COVID Test to Treat](#) services or call (217) 545-5100. An additional option is the [NIH Test to Treat line](#) or call 1-800-682-2829 to get access to no-cost care.

The federal government has established a website that provides an all-purpose toolkit with information on how to obtain masks, treatment, vaccines and testing resources for all areas of the country at: <https://www.covid.gov/>.