

**Promoting Respiratory Illness Vaccination**

**2024–2025 Toolkit for Health Care Providers**

Wisconsin Department of Health Services **|** Division of Public Health

Bureau of Communicable Diseases **|** Immunization Section

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# **Patient Education and Outreach Tools**

Your patients trust you to provide accurate information on staying healthy and protected against respiratory illnesses. Stay updated on respiratory disease trends by regularly reviewing [state respiratory virus surveillance and vaccination information.](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/index.htm?combine=P-02346&field_division_office_owner_target_id=All&field_language_target_id=All&page=0&order=field_release_date&sort=desc) The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) offers new respiratory illness data dashboards with information on [overall respiratory activity](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/respiratory-data.htm), [emergency department data](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/respiratory-emergency-department.htm), and [laboratory data](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/laboratory-based-data.htm). DHS also offers new immunization data dashboards for [COVID-19](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/covid-19-vaccine-data.htm), [flu](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/influenza.htm), and [respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/rsv-vaccine-data.htm) for Wisconsin residents. Our wastewater dashboards will also include respiratory disease data when the new wastewater webpages are published.

Health care providers can promote respiratory vaccination by sharing the up-to-date information included in this toolkit and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) [Resources to Prepare for Flu, COVID-19, and RSV](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/tools-resources/index.html) toolkit. There are additional CDC resources including, [HCP Fight Flu Toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/prepare-practice-tools.htm#anchor_1566404605), [COVID-19 vaccination resources for providers](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/index.html), and RSV resources for providers for [pregnant people](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/pregnant-people.html), [infants and young children,](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/child.html) and [adults 60 years of age and older](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/older-adults.html). Remind your patients that it is not too late to get protection against respiratory illnesses with vaccination, proper hygiene, and prevention measures.

**Posters, Infographics, Factsheets and More**

* Print free [posters](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/php/toolkit/index.html#cdc_generic_section_2-posters), [print materials](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/php/toolkit/index.html#cdc_generic_section_3-other-resources) and [social media posts](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/php/social-media-toolkit/index.html), in different sizes, formats, and languages for different audiences regarding flu vaccination from CDC’s [Digital Media Toolkit](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/php/toolkit/index.html). Use free [fact sheets and resources](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/communication/index.html) regarding COVID-19. Use free [factsheets, podcast, and other resources](https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/php/communication-resources/index.html) regarding RSV. DHS has RSV protection fact sheets for [pregnant people](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03654.pdf), [infants](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03653.pdf), and [infant immunization](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p03654a.pdf).
* The [COVID-19 Vaccine Homepage](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/) has easy to read frequently asked questions, information about what to expect before and after COVID-19 vaccination, and resources for health care workers.
* Use [trivia questions](https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-update-healthcare-professionals/just-vax-toolkits) on TVs in waiting areas or upload them to your website regarding flu and other respiratory viruses.
* Looking for other resources or posters for your office? Check out the [DHS Respiratory Viruses](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/respiratory.htm) page for more information on COVID-19, flu, and RSV. Additional resources include Families Fighting Flu’s [free resources](https://www.familiesfightingflu.org/flu-resources-for-healthcare-professionals/) or the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s excellent [vaccine education resources](https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/resources).

**Talking with Patients and Parents**

See [best practices](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/prepare-practice-tools.htm) for [increasing flu vaccination rates](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/hcp/vaccination-guidelines/index.html) in your practice, learn how to make a [strong vaccine recommendation](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/howirecommend/adult-vacc-videos.html) to your patients, [talk to your patients about COVID-19,](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/hcp/engaging-patients.html) and get tips for answering frequently asked questions about [flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm#give-me-flu) and [COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/vaccines/faq.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html). There are also frequently asked questions about [RSV vaccine for adults](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/older-adults-faqs.html), [RSV vaccine for pregnant people](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/pregnant-people-faqs.html), and [RSV immunization for infants](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/hcp/child-faqs.html). The Association of Immunization Manager’s (AIM) [Vaccine Confidence Toolkit](https://www.immunizationmanagers.org/resources-toolkits/vaccine-confidence-toolkit/#1628293084089-065bb38a-4f11) has tools and information to promote vaccine confidence. Answer tough questions using the Public Health Communications Collaborative’s [message guidance and framing](https://publichealthcollaborative.org/faq/).

**Social Media Posts**

Share sample messages and images (included in this toolkit) on your social media platforms. You can also share social media posts from DHS and other organizations (such as the CDC or World Health Organization) on your own social media channels. Please also include information on free or lower-cost vaccine programs you have for people who are un-/underinsured.

**Website Add-Ons**

Easily add CDC’s [flu content](https://tools.cdc.gov/medialibrary/index.aspx" \l "/microsite/id/280184) and [vaccine content](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/index.html) to your website to help encourage community members to get vaccinated using [content syndication](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/content-syndication.html).

**Appointment Reminder Templates**

* Create [reminder/recall notices](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/wir-reminder-recall-report.pdf) through the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR) to help your patients stay on top of their vaccinations.
* Use CDC’s customizable [email template](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/vaccination/flu-reminder-email-template.pdf) to remind your patients to schedule appointments for their influenza vaccines.
* Easily customize the AIM’s [routine immunization postcards](https://www.immunizationmanagers.org/resources/vaccine-confidence-toolkit-media-materials/) to remind your patients that they can call you to make appointments.

# **Sample Press Release**

This is a sample press release template for local health care providers, health departments, and Tribal health directors in Wisconsin. We encourage you to modify the template to meet the needs of your health care community.

**For Immediate Release**

Date: [xx-xx-xxxx]

**Make a Plan to Get Vaccinated this Respiratory Illness Season**

Respiratory vaccines are the best tool to protect yourself, family, and community from respiratory viruses

As respiratory season approaches, public health officials encourage you to protect yourself and your family by getting updated flu and COVID-19 vaccines. You can get both vaccines for as long as the diseases are spreading. The Centers for Disease Control and Preventions (CDC) also recommends a single-dose respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine for older adults, pregnant people, and an RSV immunization for infants. Vaccines are safe and effective and are the best way to protect against serious respiratory disease and disruptions this respiratory season.

“Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect ourselves and loved ones from respiratory illnesses and reduce risk of severe disease. It is never too late in the season to get vaccinated,” said [insert health officer name and name of local or Tribal health department]. “[Insert name of Wisconsin county] residents should make a plan to stay up to date on the recommended vaccines for this respiratory season.”

Everyone ages 6 months and older is recommended to get an updated flu and COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a flu and COVID-19 vaccine is especially important for people at higher risk for serious disease complications, including:

* People who are pregnant
* Young children
* People 65 years and older, especially those living in group settings
* People with certain medical conditions, such as asthma or heart disease

Adults aged 75 and older are recommended to get an RSV vaccine. Adults aged 60-74 can also receive the RSV vaccine if they have an increased risk of RSV. The RSV vaccine is not a yearly vaccine so those who have already received the RSV vaccine last year do not need to receive another dose this year. The RSV vaccine can protect older adults against serious RSV complications, especially those living in group settings.

Pregnant people can receive an RSV vaccine between 32 weeks and 36 weeks and 6 days of pregnancy. The RSV vaccine can protect the baby from severe RSV for up to six months after they are born. For infants, the CDC recommends receiving one dose of nirsevimab, a monoclonal antibody, to prevent severe illness from RSV. Infants younger than 8 months and infants 8-19 months with an increased risk of RSV can receive the antibody. The antibody is administered October through March. The RSV treatment can protect infants from hospitalization and serious disease. The CDC recommends maternal vaccination or infant immunization.

Health care providers in [insert your jurisdiction name] can help you get vaccinated in a safe and convenient way. You can get your flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccine (if eligible) at the same time. You can get a yearly flu vaccine at [list any known flu vaccine sites in your jurisdiction] and a yearly COVID-19 vaccine at [list any known COVID-19 vaccine sites in your jurisdiction]. If you or your child are eligible for an RSV vaccine or immunization, you can get an RSV vaccine at your doctor’s office or local pharmacy. [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov/en/) can also provide a flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccine location near you.

Please check with your health insurance plan about any costs associated with each vaccine. If you don’t have insurance, check with [insert name of free vaccine clinics in your jurisdiction]. The [Vaccine for Adults Program](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfa.htm) offers free or low-cost flu shots for eligible adults.

Additionally, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) offers new data tools this season to help keep Wisconsinites informed and safe. DHS has new respiratory illness data webpages with information on [overall respiratory activity](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/respiratory-data.htm), [emergency department data](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/respiratory-emergency-department.htm), and [laboratory testing data](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/laboratory-based-data.htm). DHS also offers new immunization data dashboards for [COVID-19](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/covid-19-vaccine-data.htm), [flu](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/influenza.htm), and [RSV](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/rsv-vaccine-data.htm) for Wisconsin residents.

Vaccination is one of the best ways to stay healthy and prevent getting sick with respiratory illnesses like the flu, COVID-19, and RSV. It is never too late to get vaccinated. You can safely get your updated flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines (if eligible) this respiratory season. Call a health care provider today to make vaccine appointments for yourself and your family. If the cost of the vaccine is a concern, you or your [children](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfc-parent.htm) may be eligible for [free or lower-cost vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/get-vaccinated/pay) [or insert your local vaccine program information].

# **Respiratory Illness Vaccine Message Map**

**General Information**

* Vaccines are safe and the best way to protect yourself and loved ones from getting respiratory illnesses.
* Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years, and there has been extensive research confirming the safety of flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
* While flu, COVID-19, and RSV are all contagious respiratory illnesses, they are caused by three different viruses and require three different vaccines.
* RSV is the leading cause of infant hospitalization in the U.S. The maternal RSV vaccine and the monoclonal antibody for infants can help prevent severe RSV in infants.
* Respiratory diseases spread quickly in close communities like nursing homes. Flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines can help prevent serious disease or even death in older adults.
* Contact a doctor or other health care provider if you have any questions about flu, COVID-19, or RSV vaccination.

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| **Key Messages** | **Supporting Information** |
| 1. It is never too late to get your flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines. | * Everyone ages 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), and [insert your organization’s name]. * Everyone aged 75 and older and those aged 60-74 with an increased risk of RSV should receive an RSV vaccine as recommended by the CDC, DHS, and [insert your organization’s name]. If you already received an RSV vaccine last year, you do not have to get another dose this year. * Pregnant people are recommended to get a vaccine during 32 and 36 weeks and 6 days of pregnancy as recommended by the CDC, DHS, and [insert your organization’s name]. * Infants younger than 8 months and infants 8-19 months with an increased risk of RSV should receive nirsevimab, a monoclonal antibody, as recommended by the CDC, DHS, and [insert your organization’s name]. Either a vaccine during pregnancy **or** nirsevimab can provide protection to infants, both are usually not needed. * It takes about two weeks for the flu and COVID-19 vaccines to fully work by activating your immune system to build up antibodies that protect you against the virus. * The ideal time to get vaccinated for flu, COVID-19, and RSV for older adults and pregnant people is September or October. The ideal time for infants to get immunized against RSV is October. * Even if you didn’t get vaccinated at the start of respiratory season, it is never too late to get protection from flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines. |
| 1. Getting a flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccine protects you and the people around you. | * Respiratory illnesses like flu, RSV, and COVID-19 can spread easily when people are gathered together, especially indoors. * Getting your yearly flu vaccine and staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting and spreading illness to others. If you or your child are eligible, getting an RSV vaccine can protect you and your community from RSV. * Infants younger than 8 months and children 8-19 months who are at increased risk for severe illness from RSV can receive one dose of nirsevimab to prevent severe illness from RSV. * Everyone ages 6 months and older are recommended to get their annual flu vaccine and stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccines. |
| 1. Call a doctor or other health care provider to make a vaccine appointment today! | * You can get vaccinated at your doctor’s office, local pharmacy, local health department, or find a vaccinator at [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov/find-vaccines/). * If the cost of the vaccine is a concern, you or your [children](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfc-parent.htm) may be eligible for [free or lower-cost vaccines](https://www.vaccines.gov/get-vaccinated/pay) or eligible for flu vaccines through the [Vaccines for Adults Program](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfa.htm). * There is enough vaccine supply available for everyone to get a vaccine. * You can safely get both your flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine during the same visit. You can also get your RSV vaccine at the same time, if you are eligible. |

# **Sample Social Media Messages**

You play an important role in getting your patients vaccinated. Promote respiratory illness vaccination by sharing these important messages on your social media channels. Please use and modify them freely. Edit to reflect the style and voice of your organization and the needs of your social media followers.

The linked photos are also suggestions. While some of these photos are free to use, your organization may have policies that prohibit their use. Check with your legal team regarding your policies on using the photos linked below.

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| **Timeframe** | **Post** | **Photo ideas** |
| Early Fall | A new school year is here! Keep your kids in school by staying up to date on routine vaccinations and respiratory illness vaccines, including those for COVID-19 and flu. Find a vaccination location near you: [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov/en/)  #PreventionIsProtection | * Children playing or learning in school. * A doctor giving a vaccine to a child. |
| Early Fall | Respiratory illness season is here! COVID-19, the flu, and RSV can make kids seriously sick. Help protect your kids by getting them vaccinated and encouraging hand washing. If cost is a concern, check out the Wisconsin [Vaccines for Children](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfc.htm) program: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/immunization/vfc-parent.htm> | * Children playing together. * Children playing with toys. |
| Late Fall | Don’t let respiratory viruses disrupt your plans! Help you and your family stay active and healthy this winter by getting vaccinated against COVID-19 and the flu. You can get both at the same time! Older adults, infants, and pregnant people can also get vaccinated or immunized against RSV. Call a doctor or pharmacy to make an appointment today.  #PreventionIsProtection | * A family doing an activity together. * An older couple doing an activity together. |
| Thanksgiving (Post on or near 11/28) | Thankful and grateful for vaccines! Vaccines are a safe and effective way to protect against serious respiratory disease. Make sure to get your COVID-19 and flu vaccines before the holiday season. Older adults, infants, and pregnant people can also get vaccinated or immunized against RSV. #TogetherWeAreStrong | * A group of people eating around a table during Thanksgiving or giving a toast. * People baking or cooking for thanksgiving. |
| Winter | Respiratory illnesses can spread quickly, especially indoors. Tips to stay healthy include:   * Getting a COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccine (if eligible) * Washing your hands * Covering your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough * Taking steps for cleaner air | * A person or child washing their hands. * A person or child covering their mouth. |
| Winter Holidays | Ready for winter break? Stay healthy with these steps so you can continue to enjoy your favorite winter activities: 1. Get your flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Get an RSV vaccine if you are eligible. 2. Wash your hands with soap and water 3. Get plenty of rest and exercise.  #EnjoyAHealthyBreak | * Kids doing activities during winter break.   Kids making snow angels or ice skating. |
| Winter Holidays | Vaccinations are a gift! Spread joy this season, not germs. Getting vaccinated against respiratory diseases is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. #HealthIsAGift #HappyHealthyHolidays | * Adults and kids baking cookies. * Adults and kids with gifts. |
| Winter Holidays | Pregnant during the holidays? Getting vaccinated against RSV is an act of love for your new baby. The vaccine can help protect your baby from RSV for up to 6 months after they’re born.  #GiftsThatMatter | * Pregnant people holding their belly or doing an activity. |
| January | Start the new year off right with some protection against respiratory viruses! Respiratory viruses start to peak around this time. Get vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 to protect yourself and your family as cases rise. Older adults, infants, and pregnant people can also get vaccinated or immunized against RSV. Find a location to get a vaccine near you: <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/> | * Baby smiling at the camera. * A group of young adults working or doing an activity together. |
| Valentine’s Day (Post on or near 2/14) | Got plans for Valentine’s Day? Get vaccinated against respiratory viruses to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your holiday plans. You can get the COVID-19, flu, and RSV vaccines, if eligible, at the same time.  #GiftsThatMatter | * A stethoscope or other medical equipment with hearts in the photo. * An older or younger couple on a Valentine’s Day date. |
| February/ March | It’s never too late to get vaccinated! Germs are still very much active and can cause serious disease. Getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. #PreventionIsProtection | * A child, teen, or older adult getting vaccinated. * A doctor talking to a patient. |

If you use any of these template posts or have feedback, please let us know! Questions? Need help? [Email us!](mailto:angelina.bray@dhs.wisconsin.gov?subject=Flu%20Social%20Media%20Messages)

You can also use other free CDC communication resources for [flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-resources/index.html) (also in Spanish) and [other vaccines](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/communication-resources.html) or the Families Fighting Flu [toolkit](https://www.familiesfightingflu.org/toolkits/). Consider posting about and sharing the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia’s educational vaccination [video game](https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/vaccine-education-center/resources/vaccine-resources-kids-and-teens) and [trivia game](https://www.chop.edu/centers-programs/parents-pack/play-just-vax-vaccine-trivia-game).