



Public Health Brief

Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH

Public Health Officer

Office: 530-694-2146, Ext 249

e-mail: rjohnson@alpinecountyca.gov

Nichole Williamson

HHS Director

Office: 530-694-2235

24/7/365 Emergency Contact Number

Dispatch: 530-694-2231, Ext 330



Tuesday December 19, 2023

So..... What is Happening, and What Should You Do?

Every year, influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cause hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths during the fall and winter virus season. Here is a sample of [recent concerning headlines](#):

- New COVID-19 variant is growing fast in the US – fitter and faster - and may disrupt holidays.
- Hospital admissions in many states are “very high”.
- Hospitals and Emergency Departments may have to ration care by the end of the month, cancelling elective procedures, and delaying care for chronic illnesses.
- 30% of COVID-19 survivors have persistent symptoms 2 years later – most commonly fatigue, cognitive problems, and pain.
- There is “long flu” too!
- Although COVID-19 deaths have significantly decreased, they still greatly outnumber annual flu deaths.
- Only about 18% of adults have received the latest COVID-19 updated vaccine this fall.

But [here is the good news](#):

- This is the first year that we have safe and effective vaccines for all 3 major fall and winter respiratory infections – COVID-19, seasonal influenza, and RSV.
- The updated COVID-19 vaccine available starting last fall appears to offer good protection from the new strains.
- The seasonal flu vaccine is a good match for the types of flu currently circulating.
- The RSV vaccine offers excellent protection for persons >60 years of age.



Public Health

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120

Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281

District 1: Charles Dobson, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Irvin Jim,

District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

What tools do you have available to use?

GET VACCINATED:

- Seasonal flu vaccine is available at no charge in our clinic in Woodfords, call 530-694-2146, Option 2 for an appointment.
- COVID-19 and RSV (persons > 60 years of age) vaccines are available for eligible persons at your local pharmacies. Call for availability. There should not be a charge.

STAY HOME IF YOU ARE SICK. IT COULD BE JUST A COLD OR ALLERGIES, BUT YOU DO NOT WANT TO GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK FOR COMPLICATIONS, HOSPITALIZATION OR DEATH.

GET TESTED:

- Free at-home tests are available at our Health Department in Woodfords and at the Public Safety Office in Bear Valley. Please call to ensure we are open during the holidays, 530-694-2146, Option 2.

GET TREATED:

- We have a free supply of Paxlovid, the oral medication for persons who test positive for COVID-19. Taking it is especially important for those who are older, and especially for anyone not fully vaccinated or has chronic medical problems which put them at higher risk for a bad outcome from COVID-19. To access, please call 530-694-2146, Option 1. I will receive your voice mail, and return your call within 24 hours, including over all the holidays. For persons in Bear Valley, you would need to obtain the Paxlovid after talking with me from your nearest pharmacy. In all cases, starting Paxlovid is more effective – the earlier, the better.

EVERYDAY ACTIONS:

- Other tools like masking, physical distancing, washing hands, and improving airflow in the places where you live, visit, travel, and work can provide an additional layer of protection.

For more details, go to:

Respiratory Virus Activity Levels: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data-research/dashboard/activity-levels.html> (Please note that California and Nevada are in the RED – HIGH ACTIVITY LEVELS)

Isolation and Quarantine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

Note: As we learn more every day, these recommendations are subject to change. That is the nature of science, as we respond to new evidence in order to protect you, your family, and our community.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120
Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281
District 1: Charles Dobson, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Irvin Jim,
District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith