
O a k H a m m o c k
— at the University of Florida® —

**Independent Living
Resident Protocols
for Respiratory Illnesses**

March 2024

Core Prevention Strategies

Respiratory viruses are responsible for millions of illnesses and thousands of hospitalizations and deaths in the United States. In addition to the virus that causes COVID-19, there are many other types of respiratory viruses, including flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The good news is there are [actions](#) you can take to help protect yourself and others from health risks caused by respiratory viruses.

CDC recommends that all people use core prevention strategies. These are important steps you can take to protect yourself and others:

- Stay up to date with [immunizations](#)
- Practice good [hygiene](#)
- Take steps for [cleaner air](#)
- When you have RSV
 - Use [precautions to prevent spread](#)
 - Seek health care promptly for testing and/or treatment if you have [risk factors for severe illness](#); [treatment](#) may help lower your risk of severe illness.

Additional prevention strategies you can choose to further protect yourself and others include:

- [Masks](#)
- [Physical distancing](#)
- [Tests](#)

Disclaimer: These recommendations are only for the Independent Living residents. They do not apply to residents or team members in the Health Pavilion. Please seek medical attention or call 9-1-1 for all emergencies.

Signs and Symptoms

COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Influenza:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV):

- Runny nose
- Decrease in appetite
- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Fever
- Wheezing

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Testing

Testing for respiratory viruses can help you decide what to do next, like getting treatment to reduce your risk of severe illness and taking steps to lower your chance of spreading the virus to others. There are various types of tests for respiratory virus infections. Antigen tests (“self-tests” or “rapid-tests”) usually return results quickly (within approximately 15 minutes). PCR tests are normally conducted by a healthcare provider. Although antigen tests are usually faster, they are not as good at detecting viruses as PCR tests. This means that you might have a false result with an antigen test

Options

- [Testinglocator.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/testinglocator/) is a link that will provide you with no-cost COVID-19 testing sites in the area.
- Obtain a self-test kit from your local retail pharmacy (COVID-19 only)
- Make an appointment with your primary care physician and/or at an urgent care office to have a viral respiratory panel (COVID-19, Influenza and/or RSV) completed.
- Treats & Treasures stocks self-test kits (COVID-19 only) available for \$26.00. If you are unwell and in need of a self-test kit, please call the dining services team at 352-548-1042 or 352-548-1043 and one will be delivered to you by a team member as supplies last at Treats & Treasures. Out of respect for others, please only purchase the self-test kits you need. These can be purchased with your dining credit.

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Exposure to COVID-19

- Get tested if you were around someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 within forty-eight (48) hours after initial exposure.
- Take a COVID-19 test at least five (5) days after your initial exposure.
- Self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 up to ten (10) days after the initial exposure.
- It is highly encouraged to wear a well-fitting face cloth covering or mask for up to ten (10) days, especially if you will be around people who are likely to get sick from COVID-19.

If you get sick

If you find yourself sick with a viral respiratory illness, you should follow these two (2) [steps](#):

- Stay at home. As much as possible, you should stay home and away from others until at least twenty-four (24) hours after
 - 1) Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
 - 2) You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- Resume normal activities, and use added prevention strategies over the next five (5) days, such as taking more steps for cleaner air, enhancing your hygiene practices, wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping a distance from others, and/or getting tested for respiratory viruses.

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What to do if you test positive or are exposed?

Notify Personal Services Manager Leah Watkins or Personal Services Navigator Lis Cherr (leave a message if after hours or on the weekend).

- Leah Watkins: 352-548-1162 lwatkins@oakhammock.org
- Lis Cherr: 352-548-1152 echerr@oakhammock.org

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . (2023, May 17). *COVID-19*. Retrieved from What to do if you have been around someone with COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/easy-to-read/what-to-do-around-someone-with-covid-19.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention . (2024, March 1st). *Respiratory Illnesses*. Retrieved from Background for CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/background/index.html#executive>

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