



Department of Public Health



MAYOR

Oscar Leeser

March 4, 2024

CITY COUNCIL

District 1

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District 2

Dr. Josh Acevedo

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Joe Molinar

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Isabel Salcido

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INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Cary Westin

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health is updating its recommendations for the prevention of respiratory diseases that include the most common respiratory viruses such as COVID-19, Influenza, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus Infection (RSV), among others. The development of an effective vaccine, antiviral medications, and viral mutations are the three main contributors to the sharp decline in hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 in contrast to the experiences we had in 2020-2021.

While COVID-19 remains prevalent in all communities, it is important to acknowledge that we find ourselves in a different period compared to the early stages of the pandemic in 2020-2021, where many people lost their lives or lived with medical complications from COVID-19. Currently, the majority of the population, has developed protection or immunity from the two main forms (natural immunity obtained from a virus infection and acquired immunity from the vaccine) against severe disease and death.

The following recommendations are applicable to the most common respiratory diseases due to the similarities they share in mode of transmission and available prevention tools. These recommendations align with what has been published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), based on cumulative data from epidemiological reports and research conducted on prevalent respiratory viruses, particularly COVID-19 and Influenza.

It is imperative to mention that any new novel virus/disease may require separate recommendations such as the ones issued for COVID-19 at the beginning of the pandemic.

STAY HOME:

People with symptoms* and fever should stay home until:

- There has been NO fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication), **and**
- Symptoms are overall improving for at least 24 hours.

People with symptoms but NO fever should stay home until:

- Symptoms are overall improving for at least 24 hours.

Hector I. Ocaranza, MD, - Interim Director/Health Authority

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People with fever but NO other symptoms should stay home until:

- There has been NO fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

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* Symptoms may include chills, body aches, fatigue, runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat, cough, problems breathing, headaches, among others.

MAY CONTINUE NORMAL ACTIVITIES:

People with NO symptoms and NO fever but tests positive:

- May continue normal activities^

^When going back to normal activities, people may take added precautions over the next 5 days, such as physical distance, the use of masks, proper hygiene and/or testing when around other people, particularly those considered high risk. It's important for individuals to remember that even after they start feeling better, there's a possibility they could still transmit the virus that initially caused their illness for some time.

The reason there is no specific time frame suggested for staying at home is because each person's illness can be influenced by different factors, so it varies for everyone. These factors include immunity to the virus, the strength of an individual's immune system, and the duration and severity of the specific disease.

The following groups of people are considered High Risk due to the possibility of developing severe disease requiring hospitalization or death from the disease:

- **Older adults:** 65 years and older, particularly those with uncontrolled chronic conditions
- **Infants:** Younger than 6 months of age.
- **People with certain disabilities:** People with certain disabilities may suffer from underlying medical conditions that make them vulnerable to develop more severe respiratory diseases.
- **Pregnant Women:** Have an altered immune system.
- **Immunocompromised:** Due to congenital conditions or because they are taking medications that will weaken the immune system.

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