



DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



November 16, 2022

Dear Administrators, Teachers, Staff, Parents, and Guardians:

Benita McLarin, FACHE  
DIRECTOR

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH  
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH  
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

3240 Kerner Boulevard  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
415 473 4163 T  
415 473 6002 F  
415 473 3232 TTY  
[marinhhs.org/public-health](http://marinhhs.org/public-health)

This letter is to offer recommendations for a safe and healthy holiday season in light of the early arrival of seasonal respiratory viruses.

Influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), common seasonal viruses which normally first impact Marin in December or January, are hitting earlier than in past years. Local wastewater and case data show a rapid rise in RSV and influenza activity. COVID-19 continues to circulate, with a slight upward trend. We are experiencing strains in the pediatric care system due to increasing numbers of children with respiratory symptoms.

Yesterday, the California Department of Public Health reported the season's first pediatric flu death, in a child who was infected with both influenza and RSV.

During Thanksgiving and other holidays our social networks expand, creating new chances for respiratory viruses to spread. This makes it especially important to take the steps we have control over and know are protective.

We strongly recommend that everyone age 5 and older, and especially those over age 50, to get a fall updated COVID-19 booster and flu shot as soon as possible.

Some people may still not know that the COVID-19 shot now being offered is different and improved from the original COVID vaccines. It better fights the strains circulating in our community. No one in Marin who has received the new booster has died from COVID, and it's reduced the risk of hospitalization by 80 percent.

Similarly, the current flu shot is a good match for the flu strain we're seeing in Marin. Most healthcare providers and pharmacies offer both COVID and flu and it is safe to get them at the same time. We are including a list of current resources that are available to those seeking a vaccine.

Unfortunately, there is no vaccine against RSV yet. RSV is often spread by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your face. Hand washing, coughing or sneezing into your sleeve, and staying home when you're sick are great ways to prevent spread. Of course, wearing a high-quality mask helps prevent any

respiratory infection. We continue to recommend that those at risk for more serious illness if infected continue to mask up in indoor public settings.

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19, RSV, or influenza reach out to your medical provider or Marin County Public Health at 415-473-4163.

We're grateful for all you do to protect one another.

Yours,

Matt

*Matthew Willis, MD MPH  
Public Health Officer  
County of Marin  
3240 Kerner Blvd  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
415- 473- 4163*

**More Information**

[Vaccine Finder | Marin County Coronavirus Information \(marinhhs.org\)](https://www.marinhhs.org)  
[COVID-19 Vaccine Booster Questions & Answers \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov)  
[Statement on Bivalent COVID-19 Boosters for Children \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov)  
[Stay Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines Including Boosters | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)