

To: Colorado Child Care Facility Operators and Health Consultants-

Subject: Temporary enhancement of respiratory infection control practice in Colorado child care facilities serving children \leq 5 years old

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) is [monitoring](#) an early, rapid increase in hospitalizations for and outbreaks of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV). Hospital reports indicate that the increase in RSV cases is putting a strain on the pediatric health care system. In serving the age groups most at-risk of hospitalization due to RSV, child care facilities have an important role in helping limit the spread of illness and protecting Colorado's pediatric hospital capacity.

From Oct. 1, 2022- Nov. 5, 2022, there have been 554 RSV-associated hospitalizations in the five-county Denver metro-area (Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, and Jefferson counties), 95% of which are pediatric. As of today (Nov. 11), there have been nearly 200 confirmed RSV outbreaks reported in childcare and school settings statewide. The current pediatric RSV-associated hospitalization rate is more than double the peak of last season, and the number of RSV outbreaks reported this season has already surpassed the total for the entire 2021-2022 season. Currently, the pediatric hospitalization rate associated with RSV far exceeds influenza and COVID-19 hospitalizations though influenza and COVID-19 levels are increasing as well.

Temporary enhanced respiratory infection control practices in child care settings

CDPHE, together with our colleagues at Children's Hospital Colorado, strongly encourages all child care providers to temporarily enhance respiratory infection control practices in childcare settings, including:

- 72-hour exclusion from onset of symptoms for children and staff with new respiratory illness (note: this is a change from current guidance as those with RSV infection may not have fever).
- Consider masks for everyone 2 years and older, especially for staff with any, even mild, respiratory symptoms.
- Consider masks for all staff in facilities where respiratory illness is circulating.
- Encourage annual flu vaccinations as well as all recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Anyone 6 months and older can get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19. It is safe to get the vaccines [together](#). There is currently no vaccine for RSV.

- Reminders to cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Increased handwashing. Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or with hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol. Assist young children with handwashing and keep handwashing sinks stocked with soap and paper towels.
- Avoid touching faces with unwashed hands.
- Increase [cleaning and disinfection](#) of commonly touched surfaces and shared toys (toys and other surfaces that a child may mouth should be rinsed after disinfection before they are returned to children).
- If families are not concerned about a life-threatening emergency, encourage families to see or call a health care provider or doctor when their child has respiratory symptoms. Health care providers can help parents determine the best ways to manage a child's symptoms and when it is important to be seen in the clinic, urgent care, or emergency department.
- Continue to use CDPHE resources, such as the updated [2022-23 Guidance for Prevention & Control of Non-COVID-19 Respiratory Illnesses in Schools and Child Care Settings](#), [How Sick is Too Sick](#) tool, and [Infectious Disease in School and Child Care Settings](#).

These temporary enhanced respiratory infection control practices should continue through November 2022. Public health will continue to evaluate respiratory virus transmission levels and healthcare capacity and will share updated information later in the month.

Coloradans can find more information about RSV rates in Colorado [on CDPHE's website](#) – this page updates weekly on Wednesday to include data through Saturday of the previous week.

