

# Avoiding Illness DURING THE HOLIDAYS

There are numerous viral illnesses that can easily spread during holiday gatherings. Some illnesses- like colds, COVID-19, and the flu- are contagious and can infect others before symptoms arise.

Large holiday gatherings can result in an uptick of infections, straining our already overburdened healthcare system. Simple precautions can protect your family from contagious viral illnesses during your holiday gatherings.

## How Illness Spreads

Viruses can spread through respiratory secretions in the air. Covering coughs and sneezes, wearing a mask, and social distancing prevent illness by reducing the exposure to droplets in the air.

Surfaces can remain infectious, too. Washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds prevents transferring viruses from infected surfaces to your body.



## Common Viral Illnesses

### Influenza

**8.7 million flu infections this season alone<sup>1</sup>**

Influenza remains a serious threat to the health and well-being of our loved ones, especially older adults. Symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Muscle Aches
- Fatigue
- Sore Throat
- Runny Nose



### COVID-19

**Precautions have relaxed, but we must remain vigilant**

The updated vaccine is formulated to target recent virulent strains like Omicron. Symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Muscle Aches
- Fatigue
- Shortness of Breath
- Loss of Smell



### RSV

**Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is on the rise**

RSV is particularly impacting children, and is frequently spread in environments like schools and daycares. RSV symptoms include:

- Coughing or wheezing
- Decreased appetite
- Runny nose
- Sneezing
- Fever



Recognize Their Symptoms

## Avoiding Illness Checklist

- Avoid close contact with infected people
- Avoid sharing objects (including toys, cups, utensils, and bottles)
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoiding touching your face with unwashed hands
- Stay home if sick and avoid contact with others
- Wear a mask or use other preventative measures, like social distancing, whenever possible
- Clean and disinfect frequently used objects and surfaces, such as mobile devices and doorknobs
- Stay up to date on seasonal vaccines, like COVID-19 and the flu
- Consider asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 prior to gatherings

**STAY SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!**

For any questions or concerns about viral illnesses, please contact your physician.



<sup>1</sup>Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, December 02). Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>.