

HEALTH BULLETIN BOARD 9/1/23

FLU/RSV/COVID-19 FALL FORECAST AND VACCINES -- Go to the CDC vaccine finder: <https://www.vaccines.gov/>

Flu -- This year's formulation to fight the expected strain of 2023-24 influenza is being distributed now. The CDC recommends that everyone over 6 months old should receive the flu vaccine, preferably in September or October.

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) -- RSV is especially risky to very young children and to older adults. The virus put a heavy strain on hospitals last year due to the number of cases and its earlier than usual onset. According to NH DHHS, the pattern is shifting back to previous norms (peaking in Sep-Nov) and there's a new immunization to protect against RSV. Nirsevimab, marketed as "Beyfortus," is recommended for all infants under 8 months old who are entering their first RSV season and for immunocompromised children aged 8-19 months who are entering their second RSV season. IN ADDITION there are two new RSV vaccines for those age 60 or older. Adults should ask their health care providers about these RSV vaccines.

COVID-19 -- A new monovalent vaccine engineered to protect against the now circulating strain -- the Omicron subvariant XBB.1.5 -- will be available this fall. The CDC recommends waiting until that vaccine is available at the end of September.

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST COVID-19

While most Americans have some immunity from COVID-19 either from vaccination or the illness itself, the new XBB.1.5 strain is circulating and there are increasing numbers of cases contracted from concentrated groups of people. The usual precautions remain: Wear a mask in large groups or confined spaces.

Take a COVID-19 test if you experience the symptoms -- the current strain has cold-like symptoms (rather than the lung congestion) as well as sore muscles and fatigue. If you test positive, isolate for 5 days. If the symptoms have passed on Day 5, it's ok to circulate again but wear a mask. If the symptoms persist at Day 5, continue to isolate through Day 10.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLU, RSV, COVID-19, AND THE COMMON COLD					
Common symptoms may include cough, headaches, sneezing, runny nose, and congestion. Different symptoms may include:					
		COLD	FLU	COVID-19	RSV
	ACHES	XX	XXX	XX	X
	DIFFICULTY BREATHING	X	X	XXX	XX
	FATIGUE	XX	XXX	XXX	X
	FEVER	X	XXX	XX	XX
	LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL	X	X	XX	X
	SORE THROAT	XXX	XX	XXX	X
	WHEEZING	X	X	X	XXX

MOSQUITO CONTROL MONITORING IN PORTSMOUTH

Due to the heavy rains of the summer, mosquitoes can be found in abundance. No cases of West Nile or EEE have yet been found in NH but NHDHHS recommends removing any standing water on your property, where mosquitoes can breed. Crews from Dragon Mosquito Control, Inc., the City's contracted service, are checking swamps, salt marshes, woodland pools, ditches, catch basins and other shallow, stagnant water for mosquito larvae. When mosquito larvae are found, treatment may occur but citywide night-time road spraying for adult mosquitoes is not planned. Residents who do not want their property treated can sign up with the No-Spray Registry at www.DragonMosquito.com/No-Spray-Registry or write to Dragon Mosquito Control, Inc., PO Box 46, Stratham, NH 03885. When writing, residents should be sure to include name, physical address, phone number, the color of the house and acreage or road frontage. For more information call 603.734.4144 or email Help@DragonMosquito.com.



COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH RESOURCES

- COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are still available at no cost while supplies last. Most commercial insurance companies and Medicaid will continue to provide support.
- Free antigen tests remain widely available in communities, while supplies last.
- Recommendations for who should receive updated boosters will continue to evolve. People who have questions or concerns about how to protect themselves from COVID-19 should talk with their primary care providers, especially individuals who are at higher risk for severe COVID-19, such as older adults and people with compromised immune systems.
- New Hampshire's partnership with On-Site Medical Services for free telehealth services for treatment of COVID-19 will continue until August 31, 2023.