



What You Can Do: Simple Steps to Prevent the Spread of Respiratory Viral Illnesses this Season

A message from the Canadian Thoracic Society and the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada

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Ottawa, ON - The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) and the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease (AMMI) Canada are jointly calling upon all eligible individuals to take proactive steps to safeguard their health this fall and winter. This includes receiving their annual influenza (commonly known as the flu) vaccine and ensuring they are up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccine. Additionally, we encourage individuals to speak with their healthcare provider about the benefits of both the conjugate pneumococcal vaccine and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine that are available in Canada. As well, we recommend everyone embrace simple daily practices to mitigate the transmission of respiratory viral illnesses during this upcoming season.

"Although the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is seemingly behind us, the threat of this and other viruses like influenza and RSV remains high. As the old saying goes, 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' resonates loudly as we enter into the seasonal viral season. In Canada, we have access to effective vaccines against all three viruses which can reduce your risk of serious consequences from these infections, including reducing the risk of hospitalization and death. I would encourage everyone to speak to their healthcare provider about these vaccines and through a shared decision-making process, determine which ones are right for you," says Dr. Mohit Bhutani, respirologist, and President of the Canadian Thoracic Society.

Canadians who are immunocompromised and those with chronic diseases face an elevated risk of experiencing complications from these infections. Individuals living with chronic lung diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, pulmonary fibrosis, cystic fibrosis, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, and those who have undergone lung transplant procedures, are especially susceptible to the severe consequences of respiratory infections.

"Embrace a healthier tomorrow and arm yourself with protection. Vaccines are a shield for you and a safeguard for all those who surround you. Please get vaccinated against influenza and COVID-19 this season" says Dr. Yamamura, President of AMMI Canada.

CTS and AMMI Canada urge people to consider some simple actions that can be taken to stop the spread of influenza, RSV, and COVID-19 this season:

- Stay up to date with your COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations
- Discuss the RSV vaccine with your healthcare provider to see if it is appropriate for you
- Wash hands frequently
- Stay home when you are experiencing symptoms of respiratory-related infections
- Consider wearing a well-constructed, well-fitting mask in indoor public spaces to reduce your risk of infection
- Consult travel advice, advisories, and health notices before travelling

Consult the Government of Canada website for more information about [influenza](#) and [COVID-19](#), and the [Canadian Paediatric Society](#) on RSV.

CTS COVID-19 resources are available here: <https://cts-sct.ca/covid-19/>.

The press release and AMMI Canada influenza and COVID-19 resources are available here: <https://ammi.ca/en/resources/>.

About the Canadian Thoracic Society

The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) is Canada's national specialty society for respirology that brings together specialists, researchers, educators, and healthcare professionals working in respiratory, critical care, and sleep medicine. The CTS advances lung health by enhancing the ability of healthcare professionals through leadership, collaboration, research, learning, and advocacy, and providing the best respiratory practices in Canada.

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About the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada

AMMI Canada is the national specialty association that represents physicians, clinical microbiologists, and researchers specializing in the fields of medical microbiology and infectious diseases. Through promotion of the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of human infectious diseases and by our involvement in education, research, clinical practice, and advocacy, AMMI Canada aims to serve and educate the public and also to enhance the career opportunities of its members.

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