

# The respiratory 'tripledeemic'

December 5, 2022



## What is the 'tripledeemic'?

The respiratory 'tripledeemic' is a combination of COVID-19, RSV, and influenza that is hitting Canadians (and those around the world) particularly hard this respiratory season and causing a surge in emergency departments and hospitalizations.

## Why are we seeing this tripledeemic this year?

Many factors have led to the tripledeemic this year. COVID-19 is obviously known to cause significant illness in people. However, the past two years due to public health restrictions, we have not seen the circulation of 'regular' respiratory viruses.

Of note, **respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)** has been making headlines this year, although it has always been around. It causes symptoms similar to COVID-19 and influenza, and is known to cause particularly severe infection / hospitalization among young children and seniors. We are also seeing the return of **influenza**, something that has been virtually absent since late 2019/early 2020. Influenza is a leading cause of hospitalization and death in seniors and young children.

Levels of RSV peaked early and high this respiratory season - this along with a rapid and early surge in influenza cases as well as baseline levels of COVID-19 are causing significant illness across Alberta and Canada. It is not clear when this respiratory season will peak, but **getting vaccinated is critical to staying protected against respiratory viruses right now.**

## What can I do to stay safe and healthy?



Get vaccinated! Influenza and COVID-19 vaccines are effective, safe and can prevent severe illness. Ensuring you are up-to-date on other routine vaccines (e.g., pneumococcal) is also important



Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your arm. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.



Stay at home if you are feeling unwell! Avoid close contact with people who are also unwell.



Practice healthy habits: Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.

### Did You Know?

*Viruses are more stable in cold weather. People are indoors more often during colder months which allows viruses to pass more easily from one person to another, causing an increase in illness.*

### Did You Know?

*When it comes to influenza, Australia's winter occurs during June/July/August and is often used to predict what will happen during our winter months?*