Loudoun County, Virginia

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December 30, 2021   703-737-8771, MaryFrances.Forcier@loudoun.gov

Returning to School After the Holidays: A Checklist for Parents

As students prepare to return to school in Loudoun County after the winter break, health officials encourage parents to take steps to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses to keep their children healthy.

"Each year, the return to school after the holidays typically brings a significant increase in respiratory infections and absenteeism," said Loudoun County Health Director Dr. David Goodfriend. "This year, the problem is compounded by the winter surge of COVID-19 and the flu, which are both widespread in Virginia. So, I encourage families to take simple precautions that will help keep your children safe and in school."

The health department recommends the following strategies in a layered approach, since no one mitigation measure is perfect, because these efforts work in concert to slow the spread of illness:

- **Get vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19**. Vaccination, including getting a booster when eligible, for both the student and their family is the most important step you can take to reduce the likelihood of getting sick and passing the virus to others (see below for information on finding a vaccine).

- **Get a COVID-19 test.** Testing is one important way to identify children and adults infected with COVID-19, isolate cases and identify clusters where the virus might be spreading (see below for more information about finding testing sites).

- **Get a supply of masks.** Indoor mask use in school and other public settings reduces transmission of COVID-19, influenza and other winter respiratory infections. Everyone two years and older should wear a mask in public spaces, regardless of their vaccination status or any requirements to do so.

- **Review and practice proper safety activities for**:
  - Washing and sanitizing hands.
  - Social distancing: Keep away from others who do not live in your household whenever possible and avoiding sharing school supplies with others.
  - How to cough and sneeze without spreading germs.

Vaccination Opportunities

Anyone 5 and older is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and anyone 16 and older is eligible for a booster. To make an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine at the county's Dulles Town Center clinic, visit loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine.

In addition, COVID-19 vaccine is widely available in the community from many providers, such as medical offices and pharmacies including, but not limited to, CVS, Giant Food, Harris Teeter, Safeway, Walgreens, Walmart and Wegmans. These locations have the benefit of being able to also provide flu vaccine at the same time. Visit vaccines.gov to find a vaccination site near you.

Testing Opportunities

Many pharmacies and health care providers offer COVID-19 tests in Loudoun County. To find a provider near you, visit the Virginia Department of Health website.

Loudoun County provides free COVID-19 testing. For testing schedules and event details, visit loudoun.gov/covid19testing.

For More Information

For additional information about COVID-19 and to sign up for COVID-19 text and email updates from Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/coronavirus.

Anyone with questions about COVID-19 vaccine may call the Health Department's information line at 703-737-8300 or send an email to the Health Department.

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