

December 29, 2024

'THE WEEKLY DOCTOR DOUG REPORT'

FLU SEASON IS IN FULL SWING. IF YOU HAVE HIGH FEVER, SEVERE ACHES AND PAINS, AND COUGH...IT IS MOST LIKELY FLU...BUT TEST FOR COVID. WE HAVE FLU MEDICATION SO BE IN TOUCH. IT IS INCREASING AND IS AT NORMAL LEVELS

COVID IS LESS THAN ½ OF WHAT IT WAS LAST YEAR. THIS IS GOOD NEWS. BUT IT IS STILL AROUND.

RSV IS VERY VERY LOW.

THIS IS THE TIME TO GET YOUR FLU SHOT IF YOU ARE GOING TO DO SO THIS SEASON. THIS IS TYPICAL TIMING. THE CURRENT FLU SHOT IS IN THE PHARMACIES AND IN OUR OFFICE.

***NEW COVID VACCINE IS IN PHARMACIES. IT IS STILL A SOLID MATCH FOR THE CURRENT COVID VIRUS**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2024/2025 IMMUNIZATIONS:

DATA CONTINUES TO SUPPORT BENEFIT FROM COVID VACCINATION. BENEFITS OF THE SHOT INCREASE WITH AGE AND WITH CONDITIONS THAT PREDISPOSE TO COMPLICATIONS

**(EMPHYSEMA/COPD, HEART FAILURE, DIABETES,
IMMUNE SUPPRESSION)**

**IF YOU ARE GETTING COVID VACCINE, YOU SHOULD
GET IT AS SOON AS FEASIBLE. YOU CAN GET IT
ALONE OR WITH YOUR FLU SHOT (IT IS SAFE AND
PROVEN TO HAVE NO EXTRA SIDE EFFECTS WHEN
TAKEN TOGETHER)**

**IF YOU ARE GETTING THE FLU VACCINE FOR THIS
SEASON....GET THAT NOW, IN EARLY NOVEMBER
IDEALLY.**

CURRENT COVID STATUS:

**THE CURRENT COVID STRAINS ARE VERY CONTAGIOUS
AND PRESENT THROUGHOUT ARIZONA... WE ARE SEEING
SEVERAL EACH WEEK, MOST DUE TO TRAVEL OR LARGE
EVENT ATTENDANCE.**

**IF YOU GET SICK AFTER TRAVEL OR ATTENDING A BIG
GATHERING... DO A COVID TEST. ALL STANDARD COVID
TESTS WORK TO IDENTIFY THE CURRENT STRAINS.**

**ALL DOING WELL. BE PROACTIVE TO PREVENT NEED
FOR HOSPITALIZATION. PROTECTION IS UP TO YOU AND
NOW IS A PERSONAL DECISION. DO WHAT MAKES YOU
COMFORTABLE.**

**DATA 100% SHOWS THAT GOOD MASKS MAKE A
DIFFERENCE. THEY ARE NOT PERFECT, BUT THEY DO
REDUCE RISK OF EXPOSURE AND INFECTION.**

- I CANNOT STRESS THIS ENOUGH... IF YOU DON'T WANT COVID FROM TRAVEL... WEAR A MASK IN THE AIRPORT CROWDS AND ON THE AIRPLANE (UNTIL 10,000 FEET) ... THIS IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL AS IT WAS WHEN COVID WAS MORE SEVERE... BUT IF YOU WANT TO AVOID INFECTIONS IN GENERAL DURING TRAVEL... IT'S A RECOMMENDATION.
- EVEN SELECTIVE MASK USE WORKS WELL... SUCH AS ONLY IN CROWDED SPACES IN THE AIRPORT, AND DURING TRAVEL 'TO' YOUR DESTINATION, SO THAT YOU ARE NOT ILL DURING YOU VACATION/TRAVEL TIME. LESS IMPORTANT WHEN YOU RETURN FROM VACATION.
- GET BOOSTED IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO...PARTICULARLY OVER AGE 65 WITH HEALTH ISSUES OR OVER 75 WITHOUT HEALTH ISSUES. EVERY 6 MONTHS IS THE RECOMMENDATION FOR THIS GROUP.
- IF YOU WERE BOOSTED IN MARCH/APRIL... MAXIMUM PROTECTION IS TO GET ANOTHER SHOT IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER WHEN THE NEWEST/UPDATED VERSION IS AVAILABLE.
- FLU SEASON IS BEGINNING... FLU SHOTS IN NOVEMBER -DECEMBER FOR THIS FLU SEASON
- VERY LITTLE RSV IN THE VALLEY. IF YOU HAVE HAD AN RSV VACCINE, CURRENT RECOMMENDATION IS THAT YOU DON'T NEED ANOTHER FOR TWO YEARS.

**IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A COLD OR RESPIRATORY
INFECTION RIGHT NOW.... YOU MAY WELL HAVE COVID.
PLEASE DO A COVID TEST TO CHECK AT HOME.**

**ALMOST ALL DOING WELL, BUT WE ARE SEEING A FEW
PEOPLE NEED THE HOSPITAL TO RECOVER.**

THE CURRENT COVID VACCINE IS AVAILABLE.

**IT IS KEEPING PEOPLE FROM HAVING A MORE DIFFICULT
TIME WITH INFECTION AND KEEPING PEOPLE OUT OF THE
HOSPITAL.**

**I RECOMMEND THE COVID BOOSTER GENERALLY FOR
THOSE OVER 65. BUT.....**

- I HIGHLY RECOMMEND A BOOSTER FOR THOSE 80 &
OLDER.**
- I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER FOR THOSE
OVER 65 WITH HEART FAILURE, SIGNIFICANT LUNG
CONDITIONS, AND DIABETES.**

**CONSIDER BOOSTING WITH THE NEW COVID VACCINE TO
REDUCE RISK OF COVID AND TO REDUCE COVID
SYMPTOM SEVERITY. NEW COVID VACCINE AVAILABLE IN
SEPTEMBER.**

VACCINATIONS:

- COVID SHOT...GET UPDATED VERSION**
- FLU SHOT**

- RSV SHOT (..CAN CONSIDER TAKING IF YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN YET)

DO NOT GET ALL SHOTS AT THE SAME TIME. RSV SHOULD BE TAKEN ALONE.

COVID SHOT:

WHO SHOULD GET IT:

IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID YET AND ARE OVER 65, I RECOMMEND YOU STAY CURRENT WITH THE LATEST VERSION OF THE VACCINE. GET THE LATEST VACCINE WHEN AVAILABLE.

IF YOU HAVE HAD COVID, YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL PROTECTION AGAINST FUTURE INFECTION, BUT IS NOT A GUARANTEE.

I WOULD MAKE SURE YOU HAVE HAD A COVID SHOT DURING SPRING 2024 FOR THOSE OVER 65 WHO HAVE ADDITIONAL RISK DUE TO HEALTH ISSUES SUCH AS: ACTIVELY TREATED HEART FAILURE, LUNG DISEASE, OR DIABETES.

WHEN TO GET THE COVID VACCINE:

GET IT RIGHT NOW

RSV VACCINE:

THIS IS A NEWISH VACCINE. HAS BEEN GENERALLY AVAILABLE FOR 1+ YEAR.

WHO SHOULD GET IT:

THE MOST IMPORTANT GROUP IS NOW CLEAR....THOSE WHO LIVE IN GROUP SETTINGS, INDEPENDENT LIVING WITH PEOPLE CONGREGATE FOR MEALS AND THOSE IN ASSISTED LIVING SITUATIONS.

ALSO.... PEOPLE AT HIGHER RISK SHOULD CONSIDER GETTING THE RSV VACCINE THIS YEAR IF THEY ARE INCLINED...BUT DON'T FEEL OBLIGATED.

FOR THOSE OVER 65 WHO HAVE ADDITIONAL RISK FOR SERIOUS ILLNESS AS A RESULT OF HEALTH ISSUES SUCH AS: ACTIVELY TREATED HEART FAILURE, CANCER, LUNG DISEASE, OR DIABETES.

THERE ARE TWO VERSIONS, BOTH SIMILAR, AND THERE IS NO SPECIFIC REASON TO CHOOSE ONE OVER THE OTHER (ONE IS GSK..MAKERS OF SHINGRIX, THE OTHER IF PFIZER...MAKERS OF THE COVID VACCINE)

WHEN TO GET RSV VACCINE:

CAN GET AT ANY TIME. ANY SEASON IS FINE.

**COVID:
CONSIDER GETTING AN ADDITIONAL BOOSTER NOW IF:**

YOU ARE OVER 65 AND HAVE NOT HAD COVID

YOU ARE AT HIGHER RISK DUE TO ILLNESS/MEDICATION (ANY AGE) AND HAVE NOT HAD COVID.

**IF YOU HAVE HAD COVID OVER 4 MONTHS AGO AND WISH
TO BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY.**

**YOU ARE TRAVELING EXTENSIVELY IN THE NEXT 6
MONTHS OR ARE GOING TO LARGE FAMILY EVENTS.**

**IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND NOT HAD 6
SHOTS....AND ARE OVER 65...THE DATA IS COMPELLING
THAT ADDITIONAL SHOTS WILL KEEP YOU OUT OF THE
HOSPITAL. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS.**

**IF GOOD VENTILATION, OPEN SPACES....NO NEED TO
MASK AS A GENERAL RULE.**

**CONSIDER WEARING A GOOD MASK (KN95 OR N95)
SELECTIVELY AT BUSY INDOOR LOCATIONS TO STAY
HEALTHY ...ESPECIALLY IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID.
LIVE YOUR LIFE AND GO OUT AND ABOUT AS YOU FEEL
COMFORTABLE..... AND YOU SHOULD FEEL
COMFORTABLE DOING SO.**

HOW TO MANAGE AT THIS TIME FOR GATHERINGS:

**PEOPLE ARE GOING TO BE COMFORTABLE GETTING
TOGETHER AND THEY SHOULD GET TOGETHER.
TO REDUCE RISK....HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO CONSIDER:**

GET YOUR COVID BOOSTER

**DO NOT ATTEND GATHERINGS IF YOU ARE NOT FEELING
WELL. ASK OTHERS NOT TO ATTEND IF THEY ARE NOT
FEELING WELL.**

**KEEP AIR MOVING IN GATHERING AREAS.
VENTILATION...BY NATURAL MEANS OUTDOORS OR WITH
FANS, CAN BE HELPFUL.**

WEARING A HIGH-QUALITY MASK AT GATHERINGS IS GOOD IF YOU ARE TRAVELING AND WISH TO AVOID INFECTION FOR TRAVEL. IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR THOSE WITH TRULY REDUCED IMMUNITY...THOSE RECEIVING CHEMOTHERAPY, THOSE WITH SEVERE LUNG DISEASE, AND THOSE RECOVERING FROM RECENT HOSPITALIZATION.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

WEAR N-95 OR KN95 MASKS IN SITUATIONS THAT YOU FEEL ARE HIGHER EXPOSURE IF YOU WISH TO REDUCE YOUR RISK

WHEN GOING OUT TO ACTIVITIES.... SELECT OPTIONS THAT ALLOW FOR BETTER VENTILATION INSIDE, OR CHOOSE OUTSIDE OPTIONS

IF YOU GET SICK YOU NEED TO TEST FOR COVID. CONSIDER COMING INTO THE OFFICE PARKING LOT FOR FLU TESTING AS WELL

TREATMENT FOR COVID AND FOR FLU IS AVAILABLE AND WORTHWHILE IN MANY INSTANCES.

TREATMENT FOR RSV IS PURELY SYMPTOMATIC.... WE TREAT THE SYMPTOMS AS THERE IS NO ANTIVIRAL FOR RSV

COVID IS UNDER CONTROL ON A BROAD BASIS RISKS OF COMPLICATIONS ARE LOW FOR THE MULTI-VAXXED

**PAXLOVID ANTI-VIRAL PILLS ARE WIDELY AVAILABLE....
BUT MOST PEOPLE DO NOT REQUIRE MEDICATION TO
TREAT THEIR CASE OF COVID.**

**PLEASE LIVE LIFE, BEING CAREFUL IN WAYS THAT MAKE
YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE, BUT DO NOT RESTRICT
YOUR ACTIVITIES.**

**FOR THE UNVACCINATED.... KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE
ROAD.... COVID CONTINUES TO BE AN ISSUE.**

**THE CURRENT VARIANT IS MUCH MILDER, BUT THERE ARE
CONCERNS FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT VACCINATED. WE
ARE TREATING NEARLY ALL THE UNVACCINATED THAT
GET COVID.**

**IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS,
PRESUME THIS IS COVID AND PROTECT OTHERS!!!**

**PAXLOVID PILLS AVAILABLE FOR ALL BUT ARE ONLY
NECESSARY FOR THOSE WITH CHALLENGING SYMPTOMS
IN THE FIRST 5 DAYS OR THOSE AT HIGH RISK FOR
COMPLICATIONS FROM BREAKTHROUGH COVID.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASKING WHEN TRAVELING IS
A PERSONAL DECISION.**

- DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF IF OTHERS ARE
MASKING. IF YOU WEAR A HIGH-QUALITY MASK YOU ARE
INCREASING YOUR PROTECTION AND DECREASING YOUR
RISK.**
- I DO RECOMMEND WEARING A KN95 OR N95 IN THE
AIRPORT TERMINAL WHERE EXPOSURE IS
GREATEST.**

- ON THE AIRPLANE, WHEN THE ENGINES ARE FULLY ON, THE AIR IS BEING HIGHLY FILTERED AND EXPOSURE IS MUCH LESS. WEARING AN EXCELLENT MASK WILL REDUCE YOUR RISK DURING FLIGHT, BUT IT IS UP TO YOU IF YOU WISH TO USE THE MASK AT THAT TIME.

GUIDELINES IF YOU GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID:

<https://doctordoug.com/2022/01/10/i-have-covidwhat-do-i-do/>

COVID TESTING WITH AT HOME TESTS (ANTIGEN TESTS) ARE GENERALLY ACCURATE AND THEY ARE USEFUL. BUT A NEGATIVE TEST IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS.... IS LIKELY A FALSE RESULT.

DO A PCR TEST TO CROSS CHECK OR IF YOU HAVE CLASSIC COVID SYMPTOMS, OR YOU MAY 'HOLD ON ADDITIONAL TESTING' AND PRESUME YOU HAVE COVID AND FOLLOW PRACTICES FOR THOSE WITH COVID.

5 DAYS OF QUARANTINE AND 5 DAYS OF MASKING IS THE PLAN FOR ALL COVID POSITIVE PATIENTS WHO HAVE BEEN VACCINATED. THAT IS THE IDEAL IF YOU ARE OVER 65 AND HANGING OUT WITH FRIENDS IN THE SAME AGE GROUP. YOU CAN DO LESS PER THE CDC, GOING OUT ONCE FREE OF FEVER FOR 24 HOURS, BUT IF YOU ARE OLDER, IT IS PROPER TO QUARANTINE FOR 5 DAYS.

PAXLOVID (PFIZER PILL FOR COVID) & LAGEVRIO (MERCK PILL) ARE AVAILABLE BUT RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR THOSE AT PARTICULARLY HIGH RISK OF COMPLICATIONS (IMMUNE SUPPRESSED OR UNVACCINATED).

HOW DO I GET TESTED FOR POSSIBLE ACTIVE COVID INFECTION?

TESTING CAN BE DONE AT LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY OR BY A SELF-TEST FROM YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/11/22/covid-19-testing-sites/>

**YOU MAY PURCHASE A HOME TEST KIT FROM AMAZON OR
YOU CAN GET SIMILAR KITS AT WALGREENS OR CVS OR
YOUR LOCAL PHARMACY.**

**I THINK IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A HOME KIT
FOR SELF-TESTING AT HOME. IT IS LIKELY YOU WILL USE
IT BY THE END OF WINTER.**

RECOMMENDED HOME TEST KITS FROM AMAZON ARE:

- iHealth COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test
- Quidel QuickVue at-Home OTC COVID-19

https://www.amazon.com/iHealth-COVID-19-Authorized-Non-invasive-Discomfort/dp/B09KZ6TBNY/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1QISNYIENRKEO&keywords=ihealth+covid-19+antigen+rapid+test&qid=1655045654&sprefix=ihealth%2Caps%2C169&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUExNUkwMFdSWINQTVQwJmVuY3J5cHRIZEIkPUEwMzc1MzMzMzBUUjJUSVq4UFA5UyZlbnNyeXB0ZWRBZEIkPUEwNDQ5Mzl4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXROYW1IPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=

https://www.amazon.com/Quidel-QuickVue-at-Home-COVID-19-Test/dp/B093NBTF75/ref=sr_1_3?crid=25COAA6CR9FBY&dc

hild=1&keywords=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&sprefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3

**Yours in good health,
Dr. Lakin**