

November 24, 2024

'THE WEEKLY DOCTOR DOUG REPORT'

FLU SEASON HAS BEGUN. 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 FALL/WINTER 2024
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 YOUR 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 SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER FOR OUR NEXT, UPCOMING 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 THIS FALL:

- **COVID SHOT...GET UPDATED VERSION**
- **FLU SHOT (SEPTEMBER THROUGH DECEMBER MOST IDEAL)**
- **RSV SHOT (..CAN CONSIDER TAKING IN THE FALL 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&srefix=ihealth%2Caps%2C169&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEwNDQ5MzI4MzNBOTdXUk9TSk5FMiZ3aWRnZXROYW1IPXNwX2F0ZiZhY3Rpb249Y2xpY2tSZWRpcmVjdCZkb05vdExvZ0NsaWNrPXRydWU=

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&srefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3

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