

**January 1, 2023**

**FOR ONLY 4 MORE WEEKS WHILE COVID & FLU & RSV ARE HIGH..... CONSIDER WEARING A GOOD MASK (KN95 OR N95) SELECTIVELY AT BUSY LOCATIONS TO STAY HEALTHY FOR THE HOLIDAYS.**

**CONTINUE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE AND GO OUT AND ABOUT AS YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE..... AND YOU SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE DOING SO.**

**FLU AND RSV ARE ON THE DECLINE AND LEAVING THE VALLEY. MASKING IS NEEDED LESS BUT CONSIDER FOR THE NEXT 4 WEEKS.**

**THE CHINA OUTBREAK OF COVID IS MASSIVE. 250 MILLION CASES IN THE PAST MONTH...THAT IS EQUAL TO ALL CASES IN THE USA FOR THE PAST 3 YEARS!!! THIS IS THE UNDERSTATED NEWS STORY OF THE WORLD.**

**IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO GET ANOTHER COVID BOOSTER. WITH CHINA HAVING MASSIVE COVID, WE WILL BE SEEING SURGES AGAIN AND AGAIN. GET BOOSTED**

**FLU IS WANING. IT IS LATE FOR FLU SHOTS....YOU CAN GET IF YOU WANT, BUT FLU SEASON IS RESOLVING.**

**COVID REMAINS FAIRLY COMMON...BUT IS LESS..... OUR PATIENTS ARE DOING WELL.**

**FLU IS DROPPING. FLU IS RESOLVING. THE SEASON WAS A NORMAL FLU SEASON ...JUST STARTED EARLY. THIS IS GOOD NEWS. FLU IS ON THE DECLINE.**

**RSV IS DECLINING IN ARIZONA.... WE HAVE SEEN A FAIR BIT OF UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION THAT IS NOT FLU AND NOT COVID...**

**HOW TO MANAGE AT THIS TIME FOR HOLIDAY 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 ...TOO LATE FOR THE FLU SHOT.**

**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.**

**CONSIDER HAVING GUESTS DO COVID TESTING PRIOR TO GETTING TOGETHER. THIS IS NOT PERFECT, BUT IT**

**CAN REDUCE RISK SOMEWHAT. IT'S WORTH  
CONSIDERING.**

**WEARING A HIGH-QUALITY MASK AT GATHERINGS IS  
GOOD IF YOU ARE TRAVELING AND WISH TO AVOID  
INFECTION FOR THE HOLIDAYS. 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**

**BOOSTER COVID VACCINATIONS:  
THE NEW COVID VACCINE IS BIVALENT.... THIS MEANS IT  
CONTAINS THE ORIGINAL VACCINE COVERAGE.... PLUS,  
COVERAGE MORE SPECIFICALLY FOR BA5 FORMS OF  
COVID.**

**GIVEN THE SAFETY OF THE VACCINE, IT IS BEST FOR  
EVERY ADULT TO CONSIDER THIS BOOSTER...BUT....**

**I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER VACCINE IF:**

**YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND ARE OVER 70 YEARS  
OLD**

**YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID AND HAVE HEALTH ISSUES  
THAT MAKE YOU MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COVID  
COMPLICATIONS SUCH AS.... EMPHYSEMA, SIGNIFICANT  
DIABETES, HEART FAILURE, OR ARE ON IMMUNE  
SUPPRESSING MEDICATION.**

**IF YOU HAVE HAD A COVID INFECTION FROM 2020 UNTIL  
NOVEMBER 2021, THEN YOU HAVE A 30+% PROTECTION  
FROM THE CURRENT BA-5 STRAIN.**

**IF YOU HAD COVID AT XMAS OR LATER, THEN YOU  
SHOULD HAVE AN 80% PROTECTION FROM THE  
CURRENT BA-5 STRAIN.**

**IF YOU HAD COVID YOU CAN STILL BENEFIT FROM  
ANOTHER BOOSTER, BUT IT IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, AS**

**YOUR PREVIOUS COVID INFECTION DOES HELP BOOST  
YOUR IMMUNITY THROUGH NATURAL MEANS.**

**IF YOU HAVE HAD 4 COVID VACCINES, THE 5<sup>TH</sup> VACCINE  
IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL, BUT IT WILL PROVIDE  
ADDITIONAL PROTECTION AND IS WORTH STRONGLY  
CONSIDERING.**

**REMEMBER, IF YOU GET COVID WE CAN ALWAYS TREAT  
YOU WITH PAXLOVID PILLS, THEY ARE VERY EFFECTIVE.**

**IT IS PROVEN SAFE TO GET THE FLU SHOT AND THE  
COVID SHOT AT THE SAME TIME..... BUT I  
RECOMMEND YOU SEPARATE THEM IF POSSIBLE SO  
YOU DON'T HAVE A STRONGER REACTION TO THE  
COMBINATION.**

**GET YOUR COVID BOOSTER AND GET YOUR FLU  
BOOSTER**

**COVID BOOSTER IS FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 1 WEEK  
FLU IS FULLY EFFECTIVE IN 3 WEEKS**

**IF YOU HAVE RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS AND A  
NEGATIVE HOME COVID TEST.... YOU EITHER HAVE  
COVID BUT ARE TESTING NEGATIVE....SO RETEST, OR  
YOU HAVE FLU AND SHOULD CALL TO COME IN TO GET  
TESTED IF YOU WISH TO KNOW**

**MANY WHO HAVE AVOIDED COVID ARE NOW GETTING  
INFECTED DESPITE ALL OF THEIR EFFORTS.**

**THE NEW BA-5 VARIANT IS MORE CONTAGIOUS.  
IT IS NOT MORE SERIOUS. ALL OF OUR PATIENTS ARE  
DOING WELL. SOME NEED TREATMENT WITH  
PAXLOVID.... MOST DO NOT.**

**WE FINALLY HAD ONE HOSPITALIZATION AMONG  
HUNDREDS OF OUR PATIENTS WHO HAVE RECENTLY  
HAD BREAKTHROUGH COVID.**

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

**IF SYMPTOMS ARE MILD, THERE IS NO NEED TO TAKE  
THE PAXLOVID OR MOLNUPIRAVIR. A GOOD NATURAL  
IMMUNE RESPONSE IS A STRONG PROTECTOR AND  
PROVIDES IMPROVED FUTURE PROTECTION FROM  
INFECTION AS WELL.**

**PLEASE LIVE LIFE, BEING CAREFUL IN WAYS THAT  
MAKE YOU FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE, BUT DO NOT  
RESTRICT YOUR ACTIVITIES.  
WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION, BUT  
AT THIS TIME, IN THE USA FOR THE MULTI-VACCINATED,  
WE HAVE REACHED OUR ENDPOINT.**

**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!!!  
GET TESTED AND IF PERSISTING SYMPTOMS AND  
NEGATIVE HOME TEST.... RETEST.**

**COVID VERY HIGH IN THE PHOENIX COMMUNITY  
BROADLY. IF YOU HAVE NOT HAD COVID NOW IS A TIME  
WHEN YOU MAY CONTRACT IT.  
DO NOT WORRY BUT TAKE STEPS IF YOU WANT TO  
AVOID INFECTION.**

**BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL TRIPLE & QUADRUPLE  
VAXXED ARE DOING WELL.  
BREAKTHROUGH CASES IN ALL THOSE PREVIOUSLY  
INFECTED ARE ALSO DOING WELL.**

**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.**

**5<sup>TH</sup> BOOSTER APPROVED FOR OVER 50, AND IT DOES  
PROVIDE IMPROVED PROTECTION FOR MILD AND  
SEVERE DISEASE, BUT IT IS FINE FOR YOU TO MAKE  
YOUR OWN DECISION ON THE 4<sup>TH</sup> SHOT AS 3 SHOTS  
PROVIDE EXCELLENT PROTECTION.**

## **I RECOMMEND THE BOOSTER GENERALLY, WITH THESE SPECIFIC COMMENTS:**

### **DO GET THE BOOSTER IF:**

- YOU HAD 4 SHOTS AND DID WELL WITH THEM, YOU SHOULD DO WELL WITH THE 5<sup>TH</sup> SHOT.
- IF YOU DID NOT GET BREAKTHROUGH COVID YET.
- THE OLDER YOU ARE THE MORE BENEFICIAL THE 5<sup>TH</sup> COVID SHOT. FOR 70 AND ABOVE THE SHOT IS DEFINITELY QUITE USEFUL. UNDER THAT AGE IT'S LESS BENEFICIAL AND UP TO YOU PERSONALLY IF YOU WANT THE SHOT.
- DO STAY WITH THE SAME SHOT. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING PFIZER...STAY WITH PFIZER. IF YOU HAVE BEEN GETTING MODERNA...STAY WITH MODERNA.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MASKING WHEN TRAVELLING 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/>

100% OF OUR VACCINATED PATIENTS HAVE DONE WELL.

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.

PAXLOVID (PFIZER PILL FOR COVID) & MOLNUPIRAVIR (MERCK PILL) ARE AVAILABLE BUT RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR THOSE AT PARTICULARLY HIGH RISK OF COMPLICATIONS (IMMUNE SUPPRESSED OR UNVACCINATED). COVID PILLS ARE NOT NECESSARY FOR THE TRIPLE VACCINATED/DOUBLE VACCINATED.

IF YOU HAVE MILD OR QUESTIONABLE SYMPTOMS OR EXPOSURE AND YOUR TEST IS NEGATIVE, IT IS LIKELY ACCURATE.... BUT, IF YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT RESPIRATORY SYMPTOMS/FLU-LIKE SYMPTOMS AND

YOUR HOME TESTING IS NEGATIVE, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS IS A FALSE FINDING.

IN THE SETTING OF CLASSIC SYMPTOMS, SUCH TEST RESULTS ARE SUSPECT AS THE CURRENT ANTIGEN TESTING HAS BEEN MISSING SOME OMICRON INFECTIONS.

IF THIS IS THE CASE ARRANGE FOR PCR TESTING OR BE IN TOUCH AND WE WILL HELP YOU ARRANGE.

DO NOT ASSUME YOU ARE COVID FREE IF SYMPTOMS APPEAR STRONGLY TO SUGGEST COVID & ANTIGEN TESTING IS NEGATIVE...GET RETESTED WITH A TOP LEVEL TEST (PCR).

### **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/Quidel-QuickVue-at-Home-COVID-19-Test/dp/B093NBTF75/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?crid=25COAA6CR9FBY&dchild=1&keywords=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&srefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3](https://www.amazon.com/Quidel-QuickVue-at-Home-COVID-19-Test/dp/B093NBTF75/ref=sr_1_3?crid=25COAA6CR9FBY&dchild=1&keywords=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&srefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3)

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

[https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends\\_dailytrends](https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrends)

**To monitor the course of COVID in Maricopa County, go to: <https://covidactnow.org>**

<https://doctordoug.com/2020/06/30/covid-19-testing-sites/>

<https://nextcare.com/curbside/>

Know that our office is responding to COVID, and we are here to help. Reach out for assistance if you are not feeling well. We will develop a plan of action for you to move forward.

Yours in good health,

*Dr. Lakin*