

March 31, 2024

LOTS OF COVID REMAINS THIS WINTER AND INTO SPRING.....THERE IS A DECLINE, BUT STILL A LOT OF INFECTIONS EVERY WEEK...

ALL DOING WELL. WITH MORE TOURISTS THERE WILL BE MORE COVID. BE PROACTIVE TO PREVENT NEED FOR HOSPITALIZATION.

- **COVID REMAINS MODERATELY HIGH. DO NOT GO OUT WITH GROUPS OF PEOPLE IF YOU ARE SICK AND HAVE NOT TESTED FOR COVID.... YOU MAY HAVE COVID AND BE SPREADING IT!**
- **WEAR A MASK DURING TRAVEL IN THE AIRPORT AND ON THE AIRPLANE (UNTIL 10,000 FEET) AT THIS TIME DUE TO HIGH LEVELS OF COVID INFECTION. ONCE THE SURGE HAS DROPPED OFF, THIS IS NOT AS ESSENTIAL.**
- **GET BOOSTED IF YOU HAVE NOT DONE SO...PARTICULARLY OVER AGE 65.**
- **IF YOU WERE BOOSTED IN SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER AND OVER AGE 65, ANOTHER BOOST IS WORTHWHILE THIS SPRING. THAT SAID...IF YOU HAVE HAD COVID IN THE PAST 6 MONTHS YOU CAN HOLD ON BOOSTING.**
- **FLU IS WANING...BUT IS STILL AROUND. THE TIME FOR FLU SHOTS HAS PASSED. NO MORE FLU SHOTS THIS SEASON**
- **VERY LITTLE RSV IN THE VALLEY.**

IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE A COLD OR RESPIRATORY INFECTION RIGHT NOW.... YOU MAY WELL HAVE COVID OR THE FLU. 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.

FLU TESTING CAN BE DONE IF YOU ARE FEELING PARTICULARLY SICK WITH YOUR UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTION. FLU IS STILL AROUND.

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

VACCINATIONS THIS WINTER AND SPRING:

- COVID SHOT
- RSV SHOT

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

COVID SHOT:

CURRENT COVID IS AVAILABLE NOW.... GET IT NOW!
(It is at the pharmacies...our office does not carry this vaccine.)

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 NEW VACCINE THAT IS AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR.

(It is at the pharmacies... our office does not carry this vaccine.)

WHO SHOULD GET IT:

I DO NOT RECOMMEND IT FOR EVERYONE DURING THIS FIRST CALENDAR YEAR OF AVAILABILITY.

I DO THINK 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)

GETTING THE VACCINE THIS YEAR IS ELECTIVE. I AM NOT BROADLY RECOMMENDING IT. SEE BELOW FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

WHEN TO GET RSV VACCINE:

WAIT UNTIL NEXT SEASON AT THIS POINT...IT IS LATE IN SEASON AND RSV IS MODERATE TO LOW.

COVID:

THE 6TH COVID BOOSTER IS AVAILABLE FOR THOSE OVER 65 OR THOSE WHO ARE YOUNGER AND HAVE COMPROMISED IMMUNE SYSTEMS.

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 5 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**

BOOSTER COVID VACCINATIONS:

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 65 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 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.

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.

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!!!

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) & MOLNUPIRAVIR (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

<https://www.google.com/search?q=rapid+covid+testing+kit+for+home&qid=1630678185&sprefix=rapid+covid+test%2Caps%2C241&sr=8-3>

TESTING LOCATIONS CAN ALSO BE FOUND HERE:

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

YOU CAN SEE DAILY TRENDS FOR ARIZONA AND THE U.S. HERE, ON THE CDC WEBSITE...JUST CHOOSE 'ARIZONA' FROM THE LIST.

https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#trends_dailytrends

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

LOCATIONS FOR COVID TESTING OTHER THAN OUR OFFICE...SEE OUR UPDATED LIST:

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

LATE NIGHT TESTING AT NEXT CARE FACILITIES IS A CONSIDERATION. HERE IS THE LINK:

<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