

October 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We hope this letter finds you well. With the 2023-2024 school year underway, we want to remind you that we are now in respiratory virus season. We are writing to encourage you to take steps to protect yourself, your children and your families from respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). To learn more about these respiratory viruses, see on.nyc.gov/covid-flu-rsv-faq (available in multiple languages at nyc.gov/health/coronavirus under “Additional Resources”).

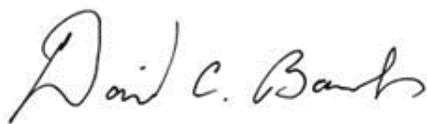
Here are some tips you, your children and your family can follow to stay healthy during this time:

- **Stay up to date on all vaccines.**
 - Vaccines are the best way to protect you, your children and your families from getting sick and spreading illness to others.
 - Many vaccines are required to attend school. To find out what vaccinations your child needs, contact your child’s health care provider. Your child may be sent home from school if they do not have required vaccinations. For more information on vaccinations required for school, visit schools.nyc.gov/school-life/health-and-wellness/immunizations.
 - Updated COVID-19 and flu vaccines are now available in New York City (NYC). The COVID-19 vaccines have been updated for the 2023-2024 season and are designed to protect against current COVID-19 variants. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone ages 6 months and older get both an updated COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine, even if they have been vaccinated or had these viruses before.
 - Check with your provider to see if they offer vaccination. To find a site that offers the COVID-19 or flu vaccine, visit vaccinefinder.nyc.gov. For vaccination assistance, call 212-COVID-19 (212-268-4319).
 - If you have young children at home, are pregnant, or are age 60 or older, talk to your provider about new RSV vaccines and preventive medicines.
- **Stay home when sick.**
 - Rest can help you and your child feel better sooner and prevent the spread of germs.
 - If children have a fever, they should stay home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours or their provider says it is OK to go back to school.
 - If you or your child has fever or other COVID-19 or flu symptoms, get tested and follow your provider’s advice about staying home and away from others. COVID-19 at-home test kits are available at schools for those who need them.
 - If you or your child test positive for COVID-19, call your provider to ask about treatment.
 - People with COVID-19 should stay home and away from others (isolate) for at least five days (Day 1 is the day after symptoms began or, if the person has no symptoms, the day after their positive test date).

- If symptoms are improving and no fever is present after five days, most children can return to school but should wear a mask until 10 days after their symptoms began (or test date, if no symptoms). People can stop wearing a mask sooner if they have two negative tests at least 48 hours apart. For more detailed guidance, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html).
- **Wear a mask.**
 - Wear a mask after leaving isolation due to COVID-19 (see “Stay home when sick” on the first page).
 - Wear a mask for 10 days after being exposed to someone with COVID-19.
 - Consider wearing a high-quality mask in crowded indoor settings, especially if you or your child has a medical condition that increases your risk for severe COVID-19 or if around others who are at increased risk. For more information about masks, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html).
- **Cover your cough and sneezes.**
 - Encourage your child to use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes or sneeze and cough into their sleeve (not their hands).
- **Wash your hands.**
 - Washing hands often with soap and water helps prevent the spread of germs.
 - If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
 - Always wash your hands before meeting small children, touching food and eating, and after meeting small children, using the bathroom, helping children use the toilet, wiping your or your child’s nose, coughing, sneezing, and changing a diaper.

Our students’ health and safety are very importance to us, and we will continue to update families on any guidance developed by the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. We wish all our families a happy and healthy fall and winter.

Sincerely,



David C. Banks
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Ashwin Vasan, MD, PhD
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