



Indiana  
Department  
of  
Health

# Infection Prevention Press

November 2023

## Respiratory Illness Season

### Fall vaccination recommendations for long-term care residents and staff

By Shireesha Vuppalanchi, MD, Medical Director

Vaccinations are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to protect against the following respiratory infections. These vaccines have been shown to prevent infection or decrease the severity of illness.

#### Influenza vaccination:

CDC recommends that adults aged  $\geq 65$  years preferentially receive any one of the following higher dose or adjuvanted influenza vaccines: quadrivalent high-dose inactivated influenza vaccine (HD-IIV4), quadrivalent recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV4), or quadrivalent adjuvanted inactivated influenza vaccine (aIIV4). If none of these three vaccines is available, they may receive any other age-appropriate influenza vaccine. All persons aged  $\geq 6$  months who do not have contraindications [are recommended to receive annual influenza vaccine](#).

#### COVID-19 vaccination:

CDC recommends that everyone age 5 years and older get one dose of an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against serious illness from COVID-19. The 2023–2024 formulation for all COVID-19 vaccines licensed or authorized in the United States (Moderna, Novavax, and Pfizer-BioNTech) has been updated to a monovalent vaccine based on the Omicron XBB.1.5 sublineage of SARS-CoV-2. There is no preferential recommendation for the use of any one COVID-19 vaccine over another when more than one recommended and age-appropriate vaccine is available.

People aged 12 years and older who are unvaccinated should get either one dose of updated Pfizer-BioNTech or updated Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, OR two doses of updated Novavax COVID-19 vaccine. Those previously vaccinated are recommended to get one dose of any of the three updated COVID-19 vaccines. Those with moderately or severely immunocompromising conditions should get vaccinated according to the guidance at this [link](#).

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## Vaccinations from pg. 1

### RSV Vaccine:

RSV can cause severe illness in the elderly and in those with underlying medical conditions. [CDC recommends](#) a single dose of RSV for ages 60 and older based on shared clinical decision making.

### Pneumococcal vaccine:

There are 2 types of pneumococcal vaccines recommended in the United States: Pneumococcal conjugate vaccines (PCVs, specifically PCV15 and PCV20) and Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV23). [Please check the mobile app](#) and enter age, if any specific medical conditions, and pneumococcal vaccination history to determine the recommended vaccines.

## ATP Machines

### Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) Luminometers Requesting Period Extended

#### Article from the IDOH Long-term Care newsletter

Please complete a short survey if you would like to receive ATP equipment for use in your long-term care facility. Please [complete the survey](#) by Dec. 6 to ensure you are on the distribution list. Long-term care (LTC) facilities that would like to receive the ATP equipment must fill out the survey by Dec. 6. You can view the original article about the ATP machines [here](#).

The ATP equipment will be delivered directly to the facility. Please gather the following information to answer the survey:

- Full name of the facility
- Exact shipping address
- Contact person's name, phone number, and email address
- Number of beds in the facility
- Number of ATP equipment requested
  - It is recommended to request for one unit if the facility has fewer than 100 skilled nursing beds and two units if there are more than 100 skilled nursing beds. Facilities with high infection control needs such as MDRO unit/vent unit/high MDRO infections may request for two units even if they have fewer than 100 beds.
- Each facility must complete the survey only once. If more than one survey is received, only the latest submission will be used in final planning.

Please email questions to IDOH Medical Director Dr. Shireesha Vuppalanchi at [svuppalanchi@health.in.gov](mailto:svuppalanchi@health.in.gov).

**If you have suggestions about what you would like to see in future editions of the IPP newsletter, email Bethany Lavender at [BLavender@health.in.gov](mailto:BLavender@health.in.gov).**

## Best Practices for Long-term Care

By Deanna Paddack, District 5 IP

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the critical importance of personal protective equipment (PPE), proper hand hygiene, and vigilant monitoring of the use of gloves and other healthcare products in long-term care facilities. Protecting the health and safety of residents and staff is paramount. Please take a moment and review the best practices and key reminders for long-term care staff in these essential areas.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

#### **Selection and proper fit:**

- Choose PPE that provides an appropriate level of protection based on the task
- Ensure PPE fits well and covers all areas of potential exposure, including masks that cover both the nose and mouth

#### **Donning and doffing:**

- Follow the correct sequence for putting on (donning) and taking off (doffing) PPE to prevent contamination
- Train staff on these procedures regularly to reduce the risk of self-contamination

#### **PPE disposal:**

- Dispose of PPE at point of exit, regular trash unless situation or facility policy requires biohazard disposal
- Avoid touching the exterior of PPE during removal, as this can transmit pathogens

#### **Eye protection:**

- In situations where there is a risk of splashes or aerosolized particles, use face shields or goggles in addition to masks

#### **Reusable PPE (not recommended unless supply chain is low):**

- Clean and disinfect reusable PPE according to manufacturer recommendations

### **Hand Hygiene:**

#### **Frequency:**

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, when hands are visibly soiled or dirty and when required based on organism exposure. ABHR at all other times.

#### **Alcohol-based hand sanitizers:**

- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol before and after any contact with residents or when required and suggested to maintain infection control standards

#### **Nail care:**

- Keep nails short and clean to prevent the accumulation of pathogens
- Avoid artificial nails, which can harbor bacteria

#### **Glove use:**

- Wear gloves, according to Standard Precautions, when it can be reasonably anticipated that contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, potentially contaminated skin or contaminated equipment could occur
- Follow TBP guidelines for residents in isolation
- Change gloves between different care activities and after potential exposure to infectious materials

## Best Practices for PPE, Hand Hygiene (continued)

### Checking Manufacturers' Use of Gloves and Products:

#### Quality assurance:

- Ensure that all PPE, gloves, and healthcare products are sourced from manufacturers who comply with safety standards. Medical gloves are examples of personal protective equipment used to protect the wearer and/or the patient from the spread of micro-organisms that may potentially cause infection or illness during medical procedures and examinations.

#### Check for expiry dates:

- Examine the expiry dates of gloves and other healthcare products and discard any expired items

#### Infection control compliance:

- Review product labels to confirm they meet infection control and regulatory requirements

#### Education and training:

- Train staff on the proper use of healthcare products and PPE, including the limitations and indications of use

#### Vendor communication:

- Establish open lines of communication with vendors to address concerns or questions about product quality or usage

In long-term care facilities, maintaining high standards of infection control, PPE usage, and hand hygiene is of utmost importance. Regular staff training, adherence to best practices, and vigilant oversight of healthcare products can help ensure the safety and well-being of both residents and caregivers. As the situation and guidelines may evolve, it's essential to stay updated and adapt your practices accordingly. Together, we can continue to provide the best care for our residents while minimizing the risk of infection. For any additional questions please reach out to your IDOH District Infection Preventionist.

## Can You Guess This Germ?

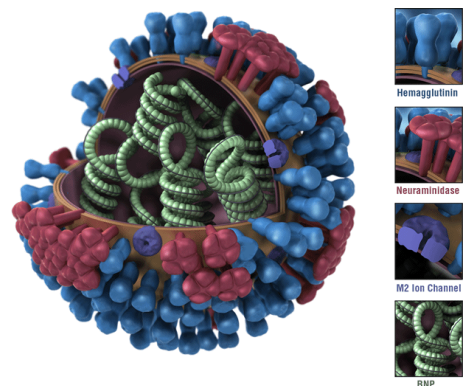
### Name that germ!

There are four types of this virus: A, B, C, and D. Two of the types (A and B) cause seasonal epidemics of the disease in the United States in the fall and winter. The best way to prevent the disease associated with these viruses is by getting the vaccine every year!

**Symptoms:** There can be a mild to severe illness that, at times, can lead to death. The symptoms usually come on suddenly. Symptoms include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue (tiredness), and some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

**Risk Factors:** Anyone can become infected (even healthy people), and serious problems can happen at any age, but some people are at higher risk of developing serious complications including people 65 years and older, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant people, and children younger than 5 years.

**Transmission:** Droplet precautions should be used for individuals in facilities. CDC also recommends everyday preventive actions (like staying away from people who are sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent handwashing) to help slow the spread of germs that cause respiratory (nose, throat, and lungs) illnesses.



Answer: Influenza (flu)

# C. diff Awareness Month

## November is C. diff Awareness Month!

Article from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

**Did you know?** *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. diff*) is a germ that causes severe diarrhea, which can be life-threatening. *C. diff* can affect anyone and is usually associated with recent antibiotic use. CDC estimates that *C. diff* causes almost half a million infections in the United States each year. Help protect yourself, your family, and your community from *C. diff*.

### For patients and families - learn:

- [Who is at risk for C. diff infection](#) and what [symptoms to look for](#)
- How you can [prevent the spread of C. diff](#) in the hospital and at home

### For healthcare professionals - download, share, and order:

- The latest *C. diff* [guidance and prevention resources](#)
- The latest *C. diff* [educational resources](#), including how to [optimize antibiotic therapy to minimize the risk of C. diff infection \[PDF - 1 Page\]](#)
- [FREE print materials](#) (search "C. diff" under "Programs", then click "Apply")
- Answers to [frequently asked questions](#) about *C. diff*
- [Christian Lillis's blog](#) about *C. diff* and the potential risks and harms of antibiotic overuse

Visit CDC's [C. diff](#) website to learn more.

Infection control plays a critical role in stopping the spread of *C. diff* in healthcare settings. It's important that all healthcare personnel understand the infection control actions they should take to stop the spread of germs. CDC's Project Firstline provides innovative and accessible [infection control resources](#) so you can help keep your patients safe.

## C. diff Burden



*C. diff* is estimated to cause **ALMOST HALF A MILLION** infections in the U.S. each year.



# Healthy Holidays

## Staying Healthy During the Holiday Season

By Pam Bennett, Former District 3 IP

We all know what season it is: germ season! That's right; we pack multiple "get everyone together" holidays right in the middle of respiratory germ season. Life is meant to be shared and lived together, especially during holidays, so how can we do that while remaining safe? We just need to remember our basic infection control practices. Hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette, staying home when we are ill, and proper cleaning are critical to stay healthy.

- **Hand hygiene** is the number one way to help stop the spread of germs. Make sure your facility has plenty of antibiotic hand rub dispensers in common areas, dining areas, entrances, and resident rooms. Just as importantly, make sure the dispensers are full and working properly. This is an excellent time to put up hand hygiene reminder posters and stickers on bathroom mirrors if you had taken them down.



- **Respiratory etiquette** is also vital. Does your facility have cough/sneeze etiquette signage up at your entrances and reminders in common areas and dining rooms?
- Do you have easily visible educational signage regarding what visitors should do if they are ill? Is it clear to stay at home and reschedule all non-essential/emergency visits when they are sick?
- Are you continuing to **clean all high touch surfaces at least daily** with an EPA approved cleaner? You could consider increasing high touch surface cleaning to each shift during the holiday season.

Along with these important infection control practices, encouraging the use of any private dining or social areas that your facility may have for group holiday gatherings will be helpful. Consider sending reminders for the reservation process of these areas to resident families now to increase usage. As always, continue to educate and encourage annual flu and COVID-19 vaccinations for all. May you stay healthy and well during this glorious holiday season.

## HAI-AR Webinar Series

IDOH is excited to host the Healthcare-associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance (HAI-AR) webinar for Long-term Care Infection Preventionists for the third year in a row! This webinar series will occur on the third Tuesday of every other month. The schedule of topics is currently being made; however, some of the topics from previous years are shown in the table. This webinar will start back up at 2 p.m. EST Jan. 16, 2024. Look for more information on these webinars in future emails! If you have questions, contact Aubrey West at [Awest@health.in.gov](mailto:Awest@health.in.gov).

2023 Topics	2022 Topics
HAI-AR program updates	MDROs
Antimicrobial stewardship	Project Firstline
CLABSI	Environmental services
Legionellosis	Transmission based precautions
ICAR 101	<i>Candida auris</i>
Influenza	Enteric diseases

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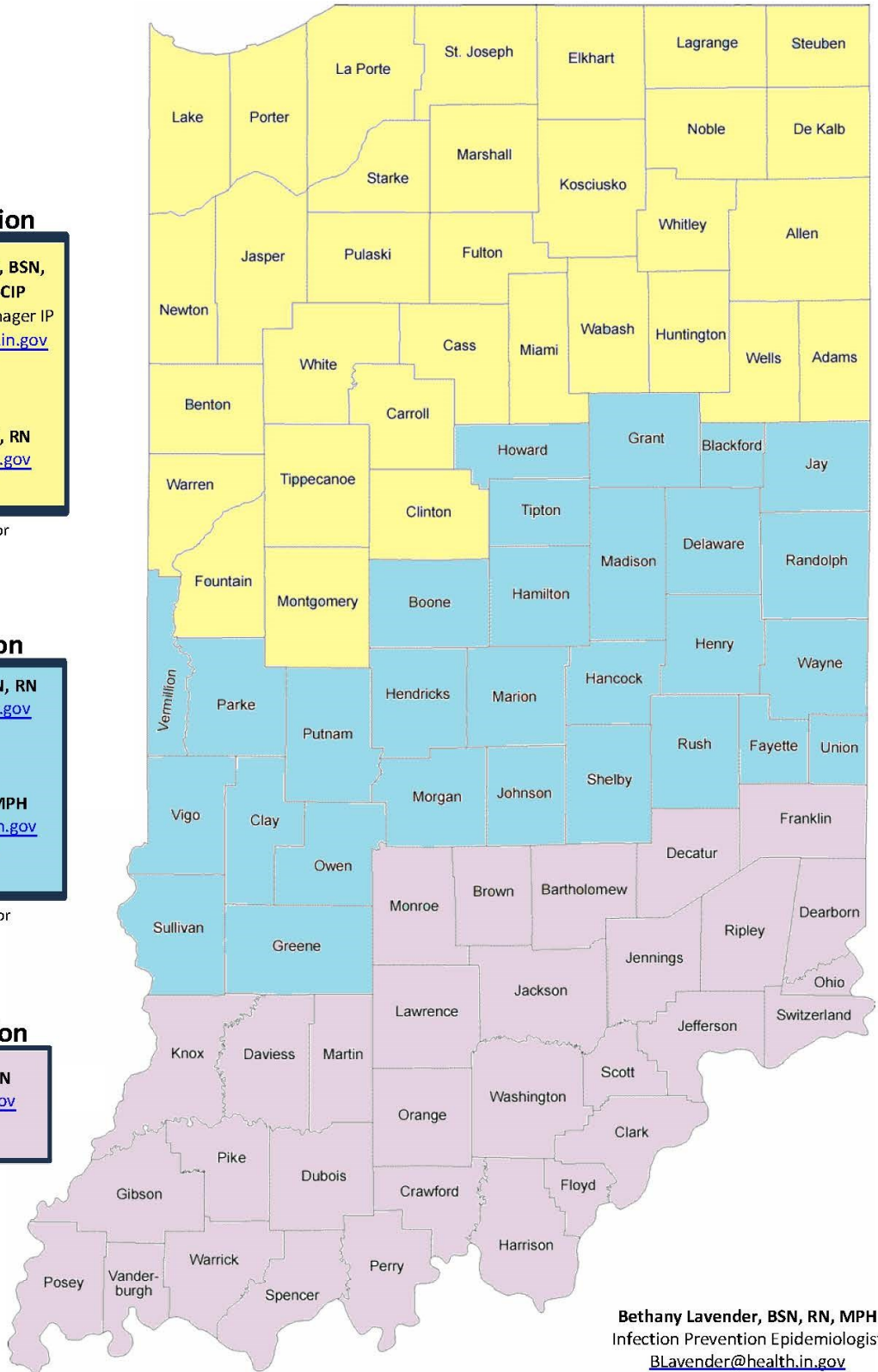
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# Links and References

If you are viewing this newsletter online, you can open the [links](#) throughout by clicking on them. If you are viewing in printed form the full URLs are below:

## Vaccinations for LTC residents and staff for the fall respiratory season

1. Influenza Vaccine Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/acip/acip-2023-24-Summary-Flu-Vaccine-Recommendations.pdf>
2. COVID-19 Vaccine Recommendations: [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_2120-DM113306&ACSTrackingLabel=Updated%20Guidance%3A%20Interim%20Clinical%20Considerations%20for%20Use%20of%20COVID-19%20Vaccines&deliveryName=USCDC\\_2120-DM113306](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/interim-considerations-us.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_2120-DM113306&ACSTrackingLabel=Updated%20Guidance%3A%20Interim%20Clinical%20Considerations%20for%20Use%20of%20COVID-19%20Vaccines&deliveryName=USCDC_2120-DM113306)
3. RSV Vaccination Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/rsv/public/older-adults.html>
4. Pneumococcal Vaccine Recommendations App: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/pneumo/hcp/pneumoapp.html>

## Adenosine Triphosphate (ATP) Luminometers Requesting Period Extended

1. ATP Machine Survey- <https://redcap.isdh.in.gov/surveys/?s=49TCNRK7JA48WHTM>
2. Original Article about the ATP Machine- <https://www.in.gov/health/ltc/files/2023-22.pdf>
3. Email for Dr. Vuppalanchi- <mailto:SVuppalanchi@health.in.gov?subject=ATP Machine Question>

## Can You Guess this Germ?

1. Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/keyfacts.htm#contagiousness>
2. Reference: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/viruses/types.htm#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20types%20of,global%20epidemics%20of%20flu%20disease\).](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/viruses/types.htm#:~:text=There%20are%20four%20types%20of,global%20epidemics%20of%20flu%20disease).)

## November is C. diff Awareness Month

1. Who is at risk: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/risk.html>
2. Symptoms: [https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/what-is.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC\\_426-DM115415#symptoms:~:text=Nausea-,What%20if%20I%20have%20symptoms%3F,-If%20you%20have](https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/what-is.html?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC_426-DM115415#symptoms:~:text=Nausea-,What%20if%20I%20have%20symptoms%3F,-If%20you%20have)
3. Prevent the spread: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/prevent.html>
4. Guidance and prevention resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/clinicians/resources.html>
5. Educational resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/materials.html>
6. Optimize Abx therapy: [https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/pdf/FS-Cdiff-HealthcareProfessionals-508.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC\\_426-DM115415](https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/pdf/FS-Cdiff-HealthcareProfessionals-508.pdf?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC_426-DM115415)
7. Free print materials: [https://www.cdc.gov/pubs/?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC\\_426-DM115415#/#/](https://www.cdc.gov/pubs/?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC_426-DM115415#/)
8. FAQ about C. diff: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/clinicians/faq.html>
9. Christian Lilli's Blog- [https://blogs.cdc.gov/safehealthcare/seeing-the-potential-harm-of-antibiotic-overuse-clearly/?ACSTrackingID=USCDC\\_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC\\_426-DM115415](https://blogs.cdc.gov/safehealthcare/seeing-the-potential-harm-of-antibiotic-overuse-clearly/?ACSTrackingID=USCDC_426-DM115415&ACSTrackingLabel=November%20is%20C.%20diff%20Awareness%20Month&deliveryName=USCDC_426-DM115415)
10. CDC's C.diff website: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/index.html>
11. Infection control resources: <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/healthcare/educational-materials.html>
12. Image: <https://www.cdc.gov/cdiff/images/USBurden.jpg>

## Safety During the Holidays

1. Handy Hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html>
2. Respiratory Etiquette Sign: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/protect/cdc\\_cough\\_nologo.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/protect/cdc_cough_nologo.pdf)
3. Medline article about cleaning LTCF: <https://www.medline.com/strategies/infection-prevention/environmental-cleaning-in-your-ltcf/>

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