

Preparing for Respiratory Illness Season

A Guide for Caregivers

CVEEP
Champions for
Vaccine Education,
Equity + Progress

Caregivers play a vital role in promoting the health and quality of life for millions of individuals. They are family members or friends who help provide care, companionship, and support to spouses and partners, children, parents, older adults, and people with chronic health conditions, disabilities, or special needs.



In 2020, in the U.S., there were an estimated



53 million caregivers¹

or more than 1 in 5 Americans.

Caregivers are advocates who help ensure that their family members and friends receive the preventive care and treatment they need—including protection from potentially serious threats from respiratory illnesses like COVID-19 and flu.

Caregivers often take on the role without any training or other outside assistance. Care plans with straightforward checklists and reminders can help caregivers prepare for the medical and non-medical needs of the people they care for and their own.

Ahead of respiratory illness season this fall and winter, developing a care plan for vaccination, testing, and treatment can help protect caregivers and the people they care for from serious illness and make a potentially stressful time more manageable.

Caregiver Care Plan



Keep a List of Medical Issues and Medications

Keep a record of 1) any medical issues the person you are caring for has, 2) a list of current medications, including any vitamins, supplements, or herbs taken regularly, and 3) any drug allergies they may have.



Stay Updated on Vaccinations

Make sure that you and those you care for receive the latest COVID-19 and flu vaccines and talk to a healthcare provider about other vaccines that may be needed to protect against severe illness and hospitalization like RSV, pneumococcal disease or whooping cough.



Monitor for Symptoms

Keep an eye out for symptoms of respiratory illness—like a cough, fever, shortness of breath, and sore throat—and seek medical advice early, especially for high-risk individuals like young children, older adults, and individuals with certain medical conditions.



Access Treatments

Antiviral drugs can help treat COVID-19 and flu, lessening symptoms and lowering the risk of hospitalization, especially for people at higher risk for serious illness. They are prescription-only treatments that must be given early in illness, so it's important to be prepared and act quickly when the first symptoms of COVID-19 or flu appear. Talk to a healthcare provider to determine if an antiviral treatment is an option for those you are caring for.



Stay Informed

Follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the latest information on respiratory illness season and discuss any questions with your healthcare provider.