
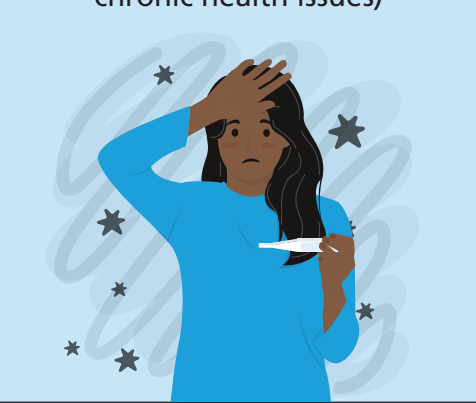
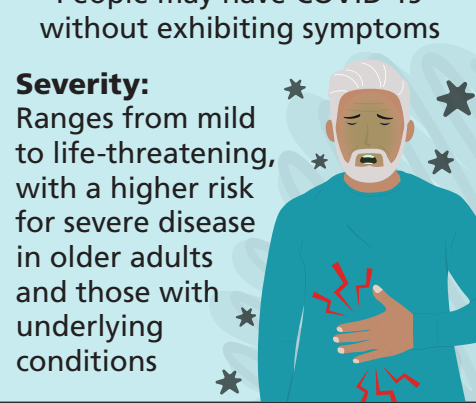





# Navigating Cold, Flu, COVID-19, and RSV this Holiday Season

As families gather to celebrate the holidays or enjoy spending time indoors, respiratory illnesses can spread easily among loved ones and friends. Cold, flu, COVID-19, and RSV share similar symptoms, making it difficult to know which one you might have. Understanding these differences is especially important for protecting vulnerable groups, like young children and older adults, who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.

Common Cold	Flu (Influenza)	COVID-19	RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)
<p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <p>Runny or stuffy nose</p> <p>Sore throat</p> <p>Cough</p> <p>Mild headache and body aches</p> <p>Sneezing</p> <p>Low-grade fever (rare in adults)</p> <p><b>Severity:</b></p> <p>Generally mild; usually resolves in 7–10 days</p>	<p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <p>Sudden onset of fever, chills</p> <p>Severe body and muscle aches</p> <p>Fatigue and weakness</p> <p>Dry cough</p> <p>Sore throat and nasal congestion</p> <p><b>Severity:</b></p> <p>Can be severe and lead to complications, especially in high-risk groups (elderly, children, pregnant women, and people with chronic health issues)</p>	<p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <p>Fever or chills</p> <p>Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing</p> <p>Fatigue, muscle, and body aches</p> <p>Loss of taste or smell</p> <p>Cough or sore throat</p> <p>Congestion</p> <p>Headache</p> <p>Nausea or vomiting</p> <p>Diarrhea</p> <p>People may have COVID-19 without exhibiting symptoms</p> <p><b>Severity:</b></p> <p>Ranges from mild to life-threatening, with a higher risk for severe disease in older adults and those with underlying conditions</p>	<p><b>Symptoms:</b></p> <p>Runny nose</p> <p>Decreased appetite</p> <p>Coughing and sneezing</p> <p>Wheezing</p> <p>Fever (usually low-grade)</p> <p><b>Severity:</b></p> <p>Mild for most adults but can be serious in infants and young children, particularly premature infants and those with lung or heart conditions</p>
			

### RSV in Children

RSV is a leading cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the airways in the lungs) and pneumonia in children under a year old. Symptoms can worsen quickly, leading to rapid or labored breathing, wheezing, and lethargy. Babies with RSV may struggle to feed due to breathing difficulties, which can lead to dehydration.



Premature infants and children with chronic lung disease or congenital heart disease are at a greater risk of severe RSV complications. Children with weakened immune systems or neuromuscular disorders may also experience more severe illness.

“RSV can be particularly challenging for young children and infants, especially those with underlying health issues,” said Kristina Feja, MD, MPH, chief of the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases at The Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s University Hospital. “Because symptoms can escalate quickly, it’s crucial for parents to monitor for any signs of difficulty in breathing or feeding and then to seek medical attention promptly.”

If you or your loved ones experience any severe symptoms of the cold, flu, COVID-19, or RSV, seek medical attention immediately. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your medical provider. This article does not provide medical advice.

### Take Care at Gatherings

To reduce the spread of these illnesses, especially in crowded gatherings, try these tips:

- **Vaccinate:** Annual flu and COVID-19 vaccines can reduce severe illness. RSV immunization is available for certain groups, including older adults and infants.
- **Practice Hand Hygiene:** Wash your hands regularly and keep hand sanitizer available for easy access during events.
- **Masking and Distancing:** For larger gatherings, consider wearing a mask if you or others are vulnerable.
- **Stay Home if Sick:** To protect others, stay home or postpone gatherings if anyone is experiencing symptoms, even mild ones.
- **Ventilation:** Increase air circulation by opening windows when possible or using air purifiers to reduce airborne pathogens indoors.
- **Clean and Disinfect Surfaces Regularly:** Germs can survive on surfaces for several hours, so clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces like toys, doorknobs, and counters, especially if anyone in the household has cold-like symptoms.



“Recognizing the differences between these illnesses and knowing when to take action will help everyone enjoy a safer, healthier holiday season. Remember, small preventive measures like vaccinations, good hygiene, and masking can make a significant difference in keeping holiday gatherings and indoor events joyful and safe,” said Henry Redel, MD, chief of Infectious Disease at Saint Peter’s University Hospital.



# UV Technology Enhances Patient Safety at Saint Peter's University Hospital



Saint Peter's University Hospital continues to prioritize patient safety using advanced ultraviolet (UV) disinfection technology with the Leviant SPACE-1 system. This initiative aims to create a cleaner, safer environment for patients, visitors, and staff by targeting harmful pathogens with precision.

According to a 2023 study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "each day, approximately 1 in 31 U.S. patients and 1 in 43 nursing home residents contracts at least one infection in association with their health care, underscoring the need for improvements in patient care practices in U.S. healthcare facilities."

The Leviant SPACE-1 disinfection system is designed to enhance traditional cleaning methods by eliminating over 99.9 percent of bacteria and viruses in just two minutes using UV light technology.

The process begins with a thorough manual cleaning of each room by Saint Peter's Environmental Services team. Once the manual cleaning is complete, the team activates the Leviant SPACE-1 system, which emits UV light to sanitize high-touch surfaces and hard-to-reach areas. This UV light works by breaking down the genetic material of germs and bacteria, effectively neutralizing them and reducing the risk of infection.

The versatile Leviant SPACE-1 equipment can be manipulated and shaped differently to fit any room, allowing the team to disinfect areas that are hard to reach with other cleaning tools. This comprehensive approach ensures the disinfection of all critical areas.

"This UV disinfection technology adds an essential layer of protection, significantly lowering the presence of harmful germs that contribute to healthcare-associated infections," said Alma Ratcliffe, MD, vice president and chief clinical transformation officer, Saint Peter's Healthcare System. "Through the Leviant SPACE-1 system, Saint Peter's demonstrates a commitment to patient safety, leveraging UV technology to maintain an exceptionally clean environment and reduce the spread of infections."

**To learn more about Saint Peter's commitment to a clean environment and to see the Leviant SPACE-1 in action, please visit [saintpetershcs.com/UV](https://saintpetershcs.com/UV).**



## Community Calendar

### Cancer Support

**Bone Marrow Transplant**  
For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant  
Call for information: 732.235.8522

**Breast Cancer**  
Call for information: 732.235.7011

**Gynecologic Cancer**  
In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central NJ  
Call for information: 732.235.6792

**Living with Cancer**  
Call for information: 732.235.7557

### Diabetes Education\*

For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.

**Diabetes Self-Management Education\***  
Call for information: 732.339.7630

**Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education\***  
Call for information: 732.339.7630

**Prevent T2 Program**  
Call for information and registration: 732.339.7772

### Parent Education

Some parenting classes are being held online. Register at [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation](https://saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation). Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579.

**Baby Care Birth Center Class**  
(for moms under midwifery care)

**Breastfeeding Class**

**Grandparents Class**

**Hypnobirthing**

**New Daddy Class**

**Prenatal Yoga/Exercise Class**

**Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes**

**Sibling Class**

### Parent Support

Registration is required. Visit [saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation](https://saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation) or call 732.745.8579.

**Breastfeeding Support Group**  
1st Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: December 3 • 1 pm

**New Moms Support Group "Life Will Never Be The Same"**  
1st Tuesday of each month  
Next meeting: December 3 • 12 pm

### Support Groups

**Bariatric Behavioral Health Support**  
Every Wednesday • 5 – 7 pm  
Call 732.745.8600, x6634 for Zoom meeting information • Meetings conducted in English and Spanish

**Bariatric Nutrition Support**  
2nd Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: December 12 • 6 – 7 pm  
Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

**Bereavement**  
Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565

**Craniofacial Teen Girls**  
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113

**MyGoal Autism Family**  
2nd Sunday of each month  
Next meeting: December 8 • 3 pm  
Call 877.886.9462 or email [info@mygoalautism.org](mailto:info@mygoalautism.org) for virtual meeting information

**SHARE**  
3rd Thursday of each month  
Next meeting: December 19 • 7 – 9 pm  
Call 732.745.8522 or email [imariano@saintpetersuh.com](mailto:imariano@saintpetersuh.com) for Zoom link

**Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support**  
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8653

**Virtual Toy Drive**  
benefiting  
**THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**  
AT SAINT PETER'S UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL  
A MEMBER OF SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

**Donate today or host your own virtual fundraiser!**  
For more information visit [saintpetershcs.com/toydrive](https://saintpetershcs.com/toydrive) or scan the QR Code.

**COVID-19 Vaccines**  
For age eligibility and clinic locations and dates, visit [saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine](https://saintpetershcs.com/covidvaccine)

**Saint Peter's Virtual Urgent Care**

**Monday – Friday 5 to 10 p.m.**  
**Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

[saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare](https://saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare)

**Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit [saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician](https://saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician). Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at [BookMySPDoc.com](https://BookMySPDoc.com)**

This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.

**SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM**

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