

Changing the Way We Work

Sept 5, 2025: Infectious Disease: Preparing for Fall & Important Vaccine Updates

Panelists: Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Dr. Allison McGeer

Moderator: Dr. Ali Damji

Curated answers from CoP guests, panelists and co-hosts to the top five in-session questions posed by participants, based on current guidance and information available at the time.

Are we still checking waste water in Ontario for COVID?

Yes, but in a much more limited number of sites. Find more information [here](#).

What is the accuracy of COVID RAT; is it worth testing in the office/home environment and will they be available in the community?

I think you can still order RATs online. They are specific (so if you test positive, it is likely COVID), but not very sensitive (so if you test negative it may still be COVID).

For a senior travelling this month should they take the present COVID-19 vaccine or wait for the next one?

It is fine to get the vaccine now; the problem is that it is almost impossible to find supply. COVID infection rates are low enough right now that people can still travel without worrying.

Why was threshold year of birth for natural measles immunity raise from 1957 to 1970? The original killed vaccine for measles was suboptimal.

It was based on experience with outbreaks and the fact that with the suboptimal vaccine a lot of people got measles. I was very nervous about this for a long time (in part because the CDC was still using 1957). But in this outbreak the breakpoint of 1970 has been working well. Less than 5 per cent of people in the outbreak have been born before 1970 and their experience has been mild.

How old is old when talking about older patients? (65? or 70?) What about healthy 72-year olds?

The increase in risk is exponential, and increases every year. But for COVID, the current line from NACI is 65 years. Severe RSV infection becomes important at older ages as compared to flu and COVID so that is why the RSV program for older adults starts at 75 (this is also partly about the cost of the vaccine as well, of course).

Should we be wearing masks in our office?

There is no absolute answer to this. Masks work most effectively when ill people wear them, so I think you should have masks available and notices that ask people who have respiratory symptoms to wear them and let others know that they are welcome to. There are frail and immunocompromised patients who also greatly appreciate HCWs wearing masks, and so I think that offering to wear masks shows kindness. When COVID-19 and influenza activity is higher, then it will be perfectly reasonable to wear masks.

How long can we now say that the RSV vaccine protects? Is the real-world data supporting 3 years? More?

You can only tell one year at a time. So far 2.5 years looks good (the season was out of whack at the beginning); we'll have 3-year data soon. Then we'll have to wait for 4.

These additional questions and comments were answered live during the session. To view responses, please refer to the session recording.

- Measles vaccine at age 6-12 months, which site of injection is recommended?
- When is covid vaccine coming out?
- What is known about longer-term impacts of COVID?
- I have been washing my hands for 20 years and masking for 5. I didn't stop getting sick several times each season until I started masking. The difference has been dramatic. Will we be making strong masking recommendations for healthcare environments over the respiratory season?
- Did I hear that correctly? RSV will now be covered for >75. I have not heard anything from our local public health (Ottawa)
- I heard that RSV will be free for seniors over 75. When does this start?
- how will we access the rsv vaccines for our >75 year olds, in our office or prescription and free at the pharmacy?
- Can we give Rsv Covid and flu together or do we need to space out?
- Can we give covid, flu and rsv vaccines all in one visit?
- How do we know whether to offer our senior's the ADJ vs. HD product??
- Where and how can patients and medical offices get COVID tests? Is there a cost associated with?
- What is the plan for availability of Covid RATs and Paxlovid for this respiratory season?
- Who can get covid tests and Paxlovid for free? What is the current evidence for Paxlovid?
- Can you give the flu vaccine to the physicians before you give to the pharmacist?
- is there data re: benefit of RSV vaccination for healthy seniors between 60 to 75? Who would have to pay out of pocket for it



- The new vaccines this year targets the SARS-CoV-2 sublineage LP.8.1. Any data on how effective this is and duration of protection?
- Is it still required to document vaccine administration on COVAXON?
- Will the ODB funding criteria for nirmaltrevir/ritonavir remain the same this year?
- What is the access to rapid test kits for COVID like for high risk patients?
- For offices that held on to last years Beyfortus that is still viable, do they wait til Oct 01 as well to administer?
- Can we please work on reversing the trend of discouraging masking, mocking those who mask as anxious or “unable to leave the pandemic behind” and start to remind people (in the public and healthcare) that it is an effective and easy tool to reduce illness.
- Will there be any public facing messaging about hand washing and masking when unwell, in public, for infection spread reduction etc? The world seems to have forgotten.
- Please remind parents and schools that masking for 10 days when ill is important. People don’t even seem aware.
- How long does it take the bat testing to come back?
- How and when can we access rsv shots for >75 for our offices
- What if person is sleeping with bat in the room? (they don't know if touched)
- Daniel, what if a person has been sleeping and a bat was discovered later i.e. unsure of whether there was touching?
- What if you are sleeping and wake up there is a bat in the room? ie unsure if there has been contact
- What about if sleeping in room bat seen?
- The old rats... do they still work?