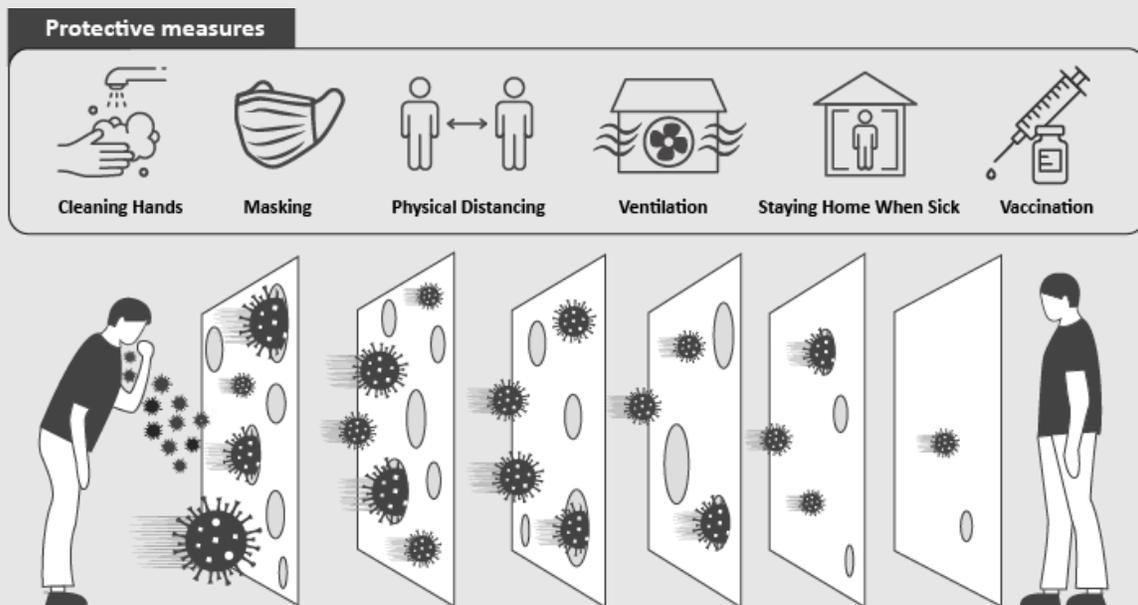


# How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses

## Ways respiratory viruses are spread

- Respiratory viruses spread primarily at short range via respiratory particles through inhalation or contact with the eyes, nose and mouth (i.e., mucous membranes).
- Transmission can also occur over longer distances by respiratory particles under some circumstances. For example, the risk is higher in crowded indoor spaces with poor ventilation.
- Respiratory particles can also land on surfaces or objects. They can then contaminate your hands and then your hands transfer viruses to your eyes, nose and mouth.

## Use multiple layers of protection to reduce your risk of respiratory illness for yourself and others



Adapted from: Rockefeller Foundation. Layers of protection against covid-19 - the “Swiss cheese” model [video recording on the Internet]. New York, NY: Rockefeller Foundation; 2021 [cited 2024 Jan 26]. 1:15 min. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ou88lei-52k>

## Clean hands and practice respiratory etiquette

- Clean your hands frequently with alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Dispose of the tissue and clean your hands.

## Masking to protect yourself and others

- Wearing a well-fitted medical mask can help protect yourself and others from getting a respiratory infection. This is especially important when you are ill, indoors and around others.
- Change masks if visibly soiled, damp or damaged.
- Clean your hands before and after touching a mask.
- Ensure the wearer can put on and take off their mask on their own.
- Children under two years of age should not wear masks.

## Physical distancing

- Keep space between yourself and others, when possible, to help reduce the spread of illness.

## Spend time outdoors or in well-ventilated indoor spaces

- Ensure your ventilation system is in good working order. If you don't have a ventilation system, open windows to increase fresh air flow, if possible.
- When possible, reduce time spent in indoor crowded spaces, especially if poorly ventilated.

## Stay home when sick

- Stay home when you are sick. For example, if you have a fever, new or increased cough, or vomiting and/or diarrhea.

## Get vaccinated

- Being vaccinated against COVID-19 and influenza helps to protect you from severe disease, including hospitalization and death.
- Remember to get all vaccines that are recommended based on your age and health status, which may include vaccines for influenza, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

The information in this document is current as of March 2024.