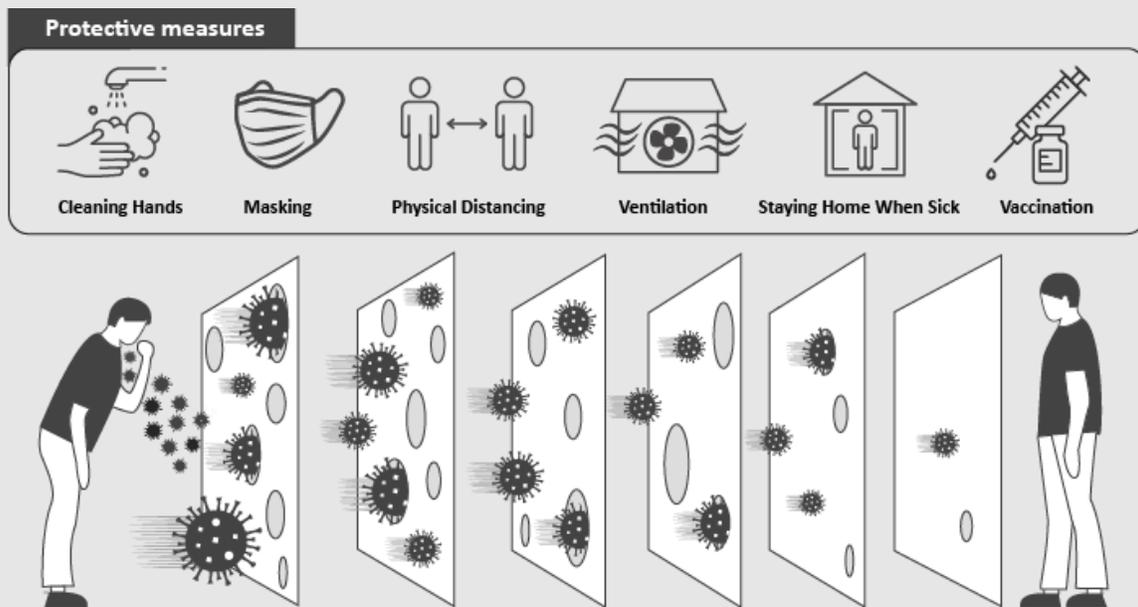


How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses

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.