



Public Health Brief

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All I Want For Christmas Is



We take it for granted when we have it, and it is not until we become ill that we wish we had it back! I'm talking about our health of course. As we approach the holiday season, we need to do everything within our power to protect ourselves, our family, and our community. This is especially important as we travel and get together with friends and family from out of the area who may be at high risk for serious outcomes from any of the respiratory illnesses that are currently circulating at high levels throughout the nation.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Alpine County Health Department, 75-B Diamond Valley Rd., Markleeville, CA 96120
Alpine County Board of Supervisors, Phone: (530) 694-2281
District 1: January Riddle, District 2: Ron Hames, District 3: Irvin Jim,
District 4: Terry Woodrow, District 5: David Griffith

We are facing a “triple-demic”. Last week, there were 41,000 new cases of COVID-19 among children in the USA, an increase of 50% over the last 8 weeks. We are experiencing the earliest and worst flu season so far in a decade, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is impacting the very young and the very old. Local hospitals are stressed, with few beds available. Shortages of medications and supplies are occurring, and at the same time, hospital staffing is 20-25% less than pre-COVID.

Building a good defense will help to protect you from hospitalizations and death:

1. Get vaccinated, boosted, and treated.

Vaccines are available for 2 of the 3 viruses in the “triple-demic” – flu and COVID. It is estimated that >185,000,000 persons have been kept out of the hospital due to being vaccinated, and 3,200,000 lives have been saved.

California reports that 37% of persons 65 years of age and older have been vaccinated against the flu – Alpine County reports that >50% of seniors have been vaccinated. For COVID boosters, again Alpine County reports that >50% of our seniors have received the new bivalent booster in addition to their previous shots. Kudos to our seniors!! However, with the good news comes the bad - <10% of our kids have been vaccinated against COVID or flu. Although their risk is lower, we are seeing the consequence of these decisions with a >50% absentee rate at Diamond Valley Elementary School.

To talk to us about obtaining COVID or flu vaccine, or to determine if you are eligible to receive the oral antiviral Paxlovid, call 530-694-2146, Option 2, or Option 1 after hours, weekends, and holidays.

2. If you get sick, stay home and get tested.

Although there are not home tests for RSV or flu, we have an ample supply of home antigen tests for COVID at the Health Department in Woodfords, and through the Public Safety office in Bear Valley.

To pick up COVID home antigen tests, call us in Woodfords at 530-694-2146, Option 2, and in Bear Valley, 209-753-2232.

3. When you are in crowded indoor spaces, especially with persons at high risk, consider masking. See: [Guidance for Face Coverings \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov/guidance/face-coverings)



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Upgrade Your Mask

Consider Fit, Filtration and Comfort

GOOD



**Surgical
Mask**

BETTER



**KF94/KN95
Surgical + Cloth**

BEST



N95

FAIR



Cloth Mask

One that fits well and has at least 3 layers. A cloth mask is better than no mask.



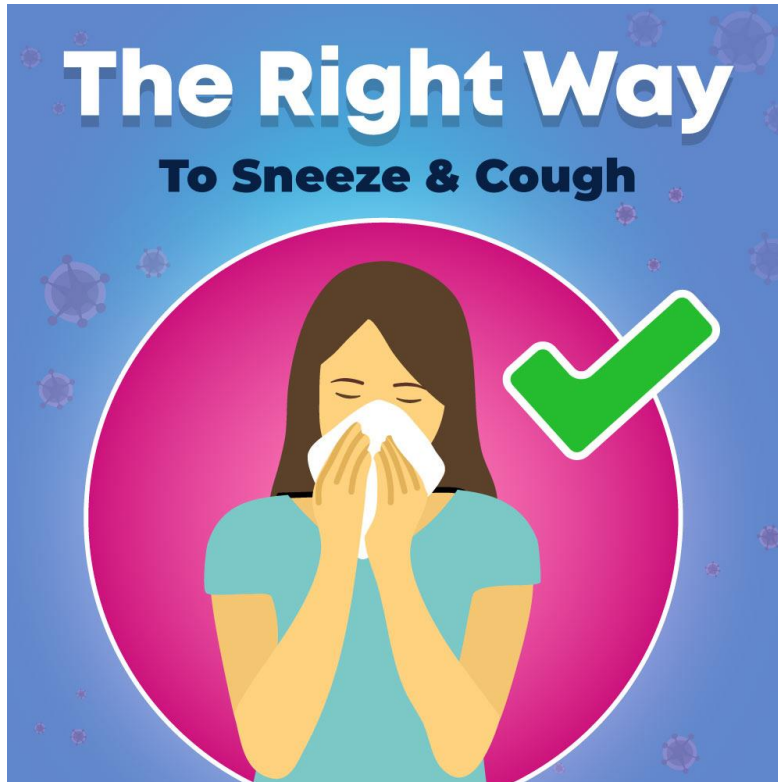
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4.



5.



Let's each of us individually and as households be grateful for the health and wellness that we have and determine to do the right thing to protect ourselves, our family and friends, and our community during this season.



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