

# News Release

For Immediate Release: Nov. 16, 2021

## **Make COVID-19 Safety Part of Your Holiday Planning, Arizona** *Getting your flu vaccine also helps maintain hospital capacity*

**PHOENIX** — Continued COVID-19 spread, influenza season, and the coming holidays make it more important than ever to plan ahead for safe gatherings with family and friends.

“There are ways to enjoy holiday traditions and connect with your loved ones while protecting yourself, your family, and your community,” said Dr. Richard Carmona, 17th U.S. Surgeon General and special adviser to Governor Doug Ducey and the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS). “Making decisions that minimize transmission of COVID-19 and seasonal flu will help maintain hospital capacity for Arizonans who most need it.”

The best way to celebrate safely is everyone ages 5 and older getting vaccinated, which protects those at high risk for severe COVID-19 and those who are unable to get vaccinated. Individuals 65 and older and others eligible for booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine should do so as soon as possible to minimize the risk of severe illness in the event of a rare breakthrough case.

It’s also important to not host or attend a holiday gathering if you are sick, have symptoms, or have recently been exposed to someone sick with COVID-19.

“The keys to putting COVID-19 in its place, even with the highly infectious Delta variant at work, are in our hands with the availability of safe, free, highly effective, and widely available COVID-19 vaccines and attention to the proven mitigation strategies,” said Don Herrington, ADHS interim director. “I strongly encourage everyone to visit [azhealth.gov/FindVaccine](https://azhealth.gov/FindVaccine) and make arrangements to get vaccinated or to get a booster dose, and then to celebrate with safety in mind.”

Even if you are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, be sure to get your seasonal influenza vaccine as well. You can safely get vaccinated against influenza at the same time you receive a COVID-19 vaccine or booster dose.

As long as COVID-19 transmission remains high or substantial, as is the case throughout Arizona, families should make safety part of their holiday planning by:

- considering an outdoor gathering;
- having participants, even those who are fully vaccinated, wear well-fitting masks over their noses and mouths in any indoor setting with those they don’t live with;
- maintaining at least 6 feet of physical distance from anyone you don’t live with; and
- getting tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms, have been in close contact with someone who is positive, or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19.

Being fully vaccinated, and getting your booster dose if eligible, will make your holiday travel far less stressful since you’ll know you have the best available protection against COVID-19.

More information on COVID-19 vaccines is available at [azhealth.gov/COVID19Vaccines](https://azhealth.gov/COVID19Vaccines). Information on booster doses is available at [azhealth.gov/Boosters](https://azhealth.gov/Boosters). If you have questions or need assistance by phone, the bilingual ADHS COVID-19 Hotline is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. seven days a week at 844.542.8201 (select Option 8 to speak with a navigator).

There are ample supplies of COVID-19 vaccine and booster doses around Arizona. To find a convenient location, please visit [azhealth.gov/FindVaccine](https://azhealth.gov/FindVaccine) and roll up your sleeve today.