



Media Release

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Yakima County Reports First Flu Death of Season

Yakima, WA- The Yakima Health District has reported the first flu-related death of the season in Yakima County. The person was between the ages of 30 and 49 and had underlying health conditions. Flu activity in Washington State is currently classified as “very high”. While last year’s flu season began early, this year flu activity started increasing in mid-December and continues to climb weekly. Based on the total number of flu tests conducted during the week of December 22, 2024-December 28, 2024, 22.55% were positive, which was an increase from 3.41% one month earlier (the week of November 24, 2024-November 30, 2024).

Flu Vaccine Recommendations

The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone aged six months and older. Those at higher risk for severe flu complications include young children, pregnant women, [people with underlying health conditions](#), and adults aged 65 and older. The flu vaccine not only reduces the risk of illness but can also be safely administered alongside the COVID-19 vaccine.

Individuals are encouraged to speak to their primary care provider about vaccination for themselves and their family to make informed decision-making. For those that do not have a primary care provider, please call 2-1-1.

For information on local clinics and pharmacies offering flu vaccines, as well as upcoming vaccine events, visit www.YakimaVaccines.org.

Public Health Recommendations to Reduce the Spread of Respiratory Illnesses

In addition to getting vaccinated, the Yakima Health District advises the following steps to protect yourself and others this flu season:

- **Stay home if sick:**

- If experiencing symptoms, get tested.
 - Free testing kiosk: A 24/7 kiosk offering free COVID-19 and flu tests is available outside Sunnyside Fiesta Foods at 2010 Yakima Valley Hwy #7, Sunnyside, WA 98944, until March 31, 2025. For more information visit www.YakimaTesting.org.
 - Order online: Households can order four free COVID-19 tests at www.COVIDTests.gov or by calling 1-800-232-0233.
- **Practice good hygiene:**
 - Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

COVID-19 and RSV Vaccines Are Also Available

The updated COVID-19 vaccine for the 2024–2025 season is recommended for everyone aged six months and older to protect against newer variants. RSV vaccines are also available for adults 60 years and older, as well as pregnant individuals during weeks 32–36 of pregnancy. For details about these vaccines, visit www.YakimaVaccines.org.

Quote

“Vaccination remains the best protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death from respiratory illnesses like the flu. With flu activity on the rise, it’s especially important for individuals to get vaccinated, wash hands frequently, and stay home when feeling ill. By taking these steps, we not only protect ourselves but also our loved ones and the more vulnerable members of our community.” -Melissa Sixberry, Director of Disease Control, Yakima Health District

Additional Information:

www.YakimaVaccines.org

www.YakimaTesting.org

www.COVIDTests.gov

[CDC: Flu](#)

[WA DOH: Are you at high risk for flu?](#)

[CDC: RSV](#)

[CDC: RSV Immunizations](#)

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