

Stay safe this winter

While we are expecting a 5th wave this winter, it's impossible to predict how severe it will be. Vaccination and natural immunity are protective – but the big unknown is a new variant and whether it will cause severe disease.

There is much we can as individuals do to keep healthy and prevent transmission to others:

- 1 Ensure your COVID vaccines are up to date
- 2 Ventilate indoor spaces
- 3 Wear a mask when indoors with others or in crowded spaces
- 4 Get a flu vaccine before June
- 5 Know what to do if you get flu- or cold-like symptoms

1 Ensure your COVID vaccines are up to date

- COVID-19 vaccines are safe and protect against hospitalisation and death.
- New research shows that vaccines reduce the duration of symptoms, the risk of long COVID and transmission to others.
- Long COVID is very real – many people who experience mild infections suffer from fatigue and cough for weeks to months afterwards, impacting their quality of life.

Find your closest vaccination site:

- www.findmyjab.co.za
- coronavirus.westerncape.gov.za/vaccine/latest-vaccination-sites
- www.facebook.com/WCGHW



2 Ventilate indoor spaces

Bring as much fresh air into your indoor spaces as possible.

- Open doors and windows.
- While it's better to open them wide, even having a window cracked open slightly can help (for example in taxis).
- Open multiple doors and windows to create a cross breeze.



3 Wear a mask when indoors with others or in crowded spaces

Continue to use masks indoors especially:

- In crowded spaces (like sports events, festivals and concerts)
- During wave periods
- If you are older or living with a chronic condition
- If you develop cold or flu symptoms

4 Get a flu vaccine before June

We are also expecting a return to a flu season this year. Strongly consider getting a flu shot if you are:

- Older than 65 years
- Of any age and live with a chronic condition
- A health worker
- Pregnant

You can get your COVID and flu vaccine at the same time, and recommend different arms.

5 Know what to do if you get flu- or cold-like symptoms

Testing and isolation advice may change according to the phase of the outbreak and will be updated accordingly. Currently we only recommend antigen testing for symptomatic people who are:

- Older than 40 years
- Of any age and live with a chronic condition
- A health worker
- Due to have surgery in the next 3 days

Testing of asymptomatic people and PCR tests are no longer routinely advised.

Symptoms?

- Consider an antigen test – if you test positive, isolate for 7 days following symptom onset.
- If you are well enough to continue to go to school and work, wear a mask to protect others for 5 days following symptom onset.
- Avoid contact with people at risk of severe COVID and social gatherings for 5 days.

