

THE BALM IN GILEAD INC.

# Sunday Morning

HEALTH CORNER



## Protecting Our Communities During Cold and Flu Season

Colds, flu, RSV, and even COVID-19 often spread quickly during the colder months. Protecting our communities means doing more than caring for ourselves — it's about taking steps that keep families, neighbors, and loved ones safe and healthy.

### Cold and flu season requires extra care for our communities

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness that can cause mild to severe sickness and, in some cases, lead to hospitalization or death. When combined with RSV and COVID-19, the risks are even greater, especially for older adults, young children, and people with chronic health conditions.

Getting the flu vaccine remains one of the best defenses. Even if someone does contract the flu, vaccination often reduces the severity of symptoms and helps prevent hospitalizations. But communities of color face barriers such as limited access, mistrust, and misinformation, which can lower vaccination rates and increase risks.

### Why It Matters

- Black, Hispanic and American Indian/Alaska Native adults have lower flu vaccination rates and higher hospitalization rates compared to white adults.
- Black adults were hospitalized at rates 80% higher during the 2021–2022 flu season.
- Trust, access, and culturally tailored information are key to protection.

### What Can You Do

- Get vaccinated: Protect yourself and reduce the chance of spreading illness to others.
- Seek trusted information: Use sources like the CDC and local health departments, and ask healthcare providers questions.
- Bring resources to the community: Encourage vaccination events at churches, schools, libraries and community centers.
- Be a messenger: Share facts with family and friends to help address myths and misinformation.
- Practice prevention: Wash hands often, cover coughs and sneezes and stay home when sick.



For more Information, visit <https://home.ecri.org/>



The mission of **The Balm In Gilead, Inc.** is to improve the health of individuals who are most at risk for chronic and acute diseases by supporting faith and community organizations in areas that mobilize and strengthen their capacity to increase awareness in areas of prevention, treatment, and access to care through education, programming and advocacy. Learn more at [balmingilead.org](https://balmingilead.org).

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