

# STAYING HEALTHY DURING COLD & FLU SEASON

Tips from Dr. Jason Konter, Pulmonologist



## WHILE STAYING HEALTHY

is important year-round, protecting yourself against colds and the flu is especially crucial during this time of year. These infections—caused by a variety of viruses, including influenza, COVID-19, and RSV—are often an uncomfortable nuisance. However, they can sometimes lead to more severe illness and may even require hospitalization.

To help keep yourself and others safe, there are a few key steps everyone should follow:



Stay up to date on all vaccinations recommended by your doctor. For most people, this includes an annual flu vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine.



If you are over 75, or between 60 and 74 with certain risk factors (such as heart or lung disease, a weakened immune system, or residence in a nursing facility), your doctor may also recommend the RSV vaccine, which is given only once rather than annually.



Wash your hands regularly to reduce the risk of catching colds.



If you are sick, try to avoid close contact with others, and wear a mask when you must be around people.

These precautions are important for everyone but are especially critical for individuals with chronic lung diseases such as asthma or COPD. Even a mild cold can sometimes trigger a significant worsening of symptoms—often referred to as a “flare” or “exacerbation”—causing increased shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing, and phlegm production.

To protect yourself, in addition to following the steps above, talk to your doctor to ensure you are on the appropriate medication regimen. It’s also important to have a plan for managing symptoms at the first sign of a cold and to contact your doctor immediately if your condition worsens.

By following these guidelines, you can help safeguard your health throughout cold and flu season—and all year long.

### About Dr. Konter

Dr. Konter, affiliated with MetroWest Medical Center, specializes in treating chronic respiratory conditions, including sleep apnea, asthma, COPD, pulmonary hypertension, and pneumonia.

Distributed compliments of



45 Union Street, Natick, MA 01760 | 508-433-4400 } [maryannmorse.org](http://maryannmorse.org)