

# Mayo Clinic Minute: Winter, holidays and keeping safe from COVID-19 and other viruses

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As the end of the year approaches, it's only the beginning of the season for illnesses like the cold and flu. Add COVID-19 and other viruses to

the list, and that can damper plans or even make gatherings dangerous.

So, what can you do to keep safe?

Dr. Tina Ardon, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, explains the steps you can take now to boost your health later.

Winter weather and holiday festivities are driving folks indoors, but that could be putting you at greater risk of getting sick. Not only are COVID-19 variants of concern, Dr. Ardon says it's the time of year for respiratory illnesses.

"Washing your hands, wearing a mask when you can and social distancing is more important than ever this winter season," says Dr. Ardon.

But that's not all. Vaccines offer an extra layer of protection. For women who are pregnant, Dr. Ardon says there are three vaccines to consider this season.

"Consider influenza vaccination if you're in influenza season. That can be given any time during our pregnancy to help protect mom and baby," says Dr. Ardon. "The second is the TDAP or diphtheria, tetanus and acellular pertussis booster, which is against whooping cough. That's indicated for women in their third trimester. And now we have the COVID-19 vaccine that's extremely important for [pregnant women](#) that, again, can be received anytime during pregnancy to help protect mom and baby."

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