

Your health this fall

Last updated: **August 2024**

Fall is here, which may mean new routines and different health and safety concerns.

Fall means cooler weather, shorter days, the start of cold and flu season, and a return to school for kids. Our children are back in school or daycare, which can mean new activities and greater exposure to germs. With less hours of daylight, many of us may participate in less physical activity.

Learn how to take care of your health, stay active and eat well this fall.

Staying healthy this fall

Back to school

For information about how to help your child stay safe and learn healthy lifestyle habits this school year, visit our [Back to school](#) health feature.

Find resources for K-12 Schools about preventing the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, for students and parents, school staff and school administrators.

Get vaccinated

Immunizations, also known as vaccinations, help protect you from getting an infectious disease. When you get vaccinated, you help protect others as well. Vaccines are very safe for you and your family. It is much safer to get a vaccine than an infectious disease.

For more information on immunizations, including routine childhood immunizations, travel vaccinations and flu vaccinations, see our [Vaccinations Health Feature](#) and the [B.C. Immunization Schedules](#).

Healthy eating

Fall can be a busy season with back-to-school and a change in routine from the summer months. [Planning meals and snacks](#) ahead of time can help make a busy schedule more manageable and mealtimes more enjoyable. Including a variety of nutritious foods and drinking plenty of water will support your immune system and help keep you healthy during cold and flu season. Learn about healthy eating this fall:

- [Healthy Eating During COVID-19](#)
- [Healthy snacks for adults](#)
- [Lighten Up Your Holiday Recipes](#)
- [Lunches to Go](#)
- [Meal Planning: Getting Started](#)
- [Eating Habits](#)

For additional healthy eating information or advice, call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian or [email a HealthLinkBC dietitian](#).

Stay active

Don't let the shorter and cooler days keep you from staying active. Physical activity is a key factor in keeping you and your family healthy:

- [Fitness: Adding More Activity to Your Life](#)
- [Healthy movement and COVID-19](#)
- [Quick Tips: Getting Active as a Family](#)
- [Quick Tips: Staying Active in Cold Weather](#)

For more physical activity information or guidance, call **8-1-1** to speak with a [qualified exercise professional](#) or [email Physical Activity Services](#).

Understanding health risks during fall

Respiratory illnesses

Several respiratory viruses are causing illness in B.C. including COVID-19 and influenza (flu). For resources to support you during respiratory illness season including information on vaccines, visit the [Handling respiratory illnesses](#) page.

Cold weather

Learn what you can do to make sure you stay safe as the temperature drops:

- [Cold Exposure: Ways the Body Loses Heat](#)
- [Cold Temperature Exposure](#)
- [Dry Skin and Itching](#)
- [Hypothermia and Cold Temperature Exposure](#)

Indoor air quality

With shorter daylight hours and colder temperatures, you might spend more time indoors. Learn about indoor air quality and how to stay safe:

- [Indoor air quality \(HealthLinkBC File #65a\)](#)
- [Indoor air quality: Combustion by-products \(HealthLinkBC File #65c\)](#)
- [Indoor air quality: Mould and other biological contaminants \(HealthLinkBC File #65b\)](#)
- [Indoor air quality: Volatile organic compounds \(VOCs\) \(HealthLinkBC File #65d\)](#)

Make sure to test your carbon monoxide detectors regularly and replace the batteries every 6 months. An easy way to remember this is to change the batteries when you set the clock back (in the fall) or forward (in the spring):

- [Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#)
- [Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: Protecting Your Home](#)

Mental health

Changes in routine, staying indoors more and getting less physical activity can affect your mental health. Shorter days, especially when we set the clocks back for daylight saving time, mean getting less sunshine:

- [Mental Health](#)
- [Mental Health and COVID-19](#)
- [Seasonal Affective Disorder \(SAD\)](#)
- [Seasonal Affective Disorder: Using Light Therapy](#)

Seasonal allergies

Pollen, molds, dust mites and other allergens can cause fall seasonal allergies. Learn about seasonal allergies, including triggers, symptoms and home treatment:

- [Allergic Rhinitis](#)
- [Allergies: Avoiding Outdoor Triggers](#)
- [Allergies: Should I take Allergy Shots?](#)
- [Hay Fever and Other Seasonal Allergies](#)
- [Over-the-Counter Medicines for Allergies](#)
- [Severe allergic reaction: Anaphylaxis](#)

When to take antibiotics

Antibiotics are medicines that kill bacteria and can treat infections such as strep throat or sinus infections. They do not work against illnesses caused by a virus such as the common cold, coronavirus (COVID-19) or the flu. Learn more about when you should and shouldn't use antibiotics:

- [Antibiotics](#)
- [Bronchitis: Should I Take Antibiotics?](#)
- [Ear Infection: Should I Give My Child Antibiotics?](#)
- [Sinusitis: Should I Take Antibiotics?](#)
- [Using Antibiotics Wisely](#)

For more information about using antibiotics, visit [BC Centre for Disease Control: Do Bugs Need Drugs?](#)

For more HealthLinkBC File topics, visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca/more/resources/healthlink-bc-files or your local public health unit. For non-emergency health information and advice in B.C. visit www.HealthLinkBC.ca or call **8-1-1** (toll-free). For the deaf and hard of hearing, call **7-1-1**. Translation services are available in more than 130 languages on request.