

News Release

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ADHS Encourages People to Seek Care in an Emergency and to Maintain Routine Medical Care *People Should Follow Guidelines to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 and Influenza While Seeking Care*

PHOENIX — Arizonans have dramatically reduced the spread of COVID-19 by wearing masks, distancing, washing hands thoroughly, and taking other steps to protect themselves and the community. But it's also important to continue seeking routine medical care such as wellness visits to primary healthcare providers, cancer screenings, managing chronic health conditions, and keeping children up to date on routine vaccinations.

The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) has launched a public awareness campaign reminding Arizonans to look after their overall health, and also to call 911 and seek care during medical emergencies.

"People who experience a medical emergency such as a suspected heart attack or stroke should not avoid calling 911 because of concerns of COVID-19 in hospitals," said Governor Doug Ducey. "Our hospitals statewide have done a tremendous job in developing and implementing protocols to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spread in their facilities."

Seeking care in the event of an emergency is critical because rapid treatment for certain conditions can dramatically improve a person's chance of survival. Through July 2020, nearly 1,800 more Arizonans suffered a cardiac arrest compared to 2018, with 10% fewer people transported to the hospital and 10% more people dying from heart attacks. Arizonans should seek emergency care if they are suffering symptoms of a heart attack or stroke.

Taking action at the first sign of these symptoms can dramatically improve the chances of recovery and could mean the difference between life and death. If anyone is experiencing life-threatening symptoms of a stroke, such as sudden weakness, numbness, or confusion, or symptoms of a heart attack, such as chest pain, shortness of breath, or nausea, call 911. In addition, it is not unusual for women to have additional symptoms, such as unexplained tiredness and vomiting.

"Arizonans have done a great job of helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by staying home and avoiding large gatherings. While we all must remain vigilant, now is not the time to skip routine medical care," said Dr. Cara Christ, director of ADHS. "This is especially important for people with chronic health conditions such as diabetes and asthma who are at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19 and the flu."

Arizonans are also encouraged to keep their children's vaccinations up to date and to get an [influenza shot](#) this year. Through July, the number of childhood vaccine doses ordered by healthcare providers participating in the Vaccines for Children program is 21% less than an average year, indicating that many Arizona children may not be up to date on their childhood immunizations.

“Immunizations are the most effective tool that we have to keep our children safe from diseases such as measles, pertussis, and dozens of other diseases that can cause serious illness, so parents need to ensure their children’s immunizations are current,” Dr. Christ said. “Everyone should also be vaccinated against influenza as soon as possible. We are entering influenza season in Arizona, and we still have community spread of COVID-19. The influenza vaccine is the most effective prevention tool we have against the virus and can lessen the severity if you do get influenza.”

Arizonans should take the following precautions to mitigate the spread of [COVID-19](#) and influenza:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wear a mask every time you are in public, even if you do not feel sick.
- Physically distance by staying at least 6 feet away from others who are not in your household when you are in public.
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people.
- Arizonans at higher risk for severe illness should continue to stay at home and avoid crowded public spaces. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

To find a flu vaccination clinic near you, please visit azhealth.gov/RollUpYourSleeve.