# Public Health Advisory

## Kugaaruk experiencing rise in viral respiratory illnesses

**February 16, 2026**
**Kugaaruk, Nunavut**

The Department of Health is advising Nunavummiut that there is a surge in cases of viral respiratory illnesses, including influenza, in Kugaaruk. To minimize the risk of contracting influenza, COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses, it's important to get vaccinated.

These steps can help stop the spread of influenza, COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses:

- **Stay home, away from school, work or other public places when you feel sick.**
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Throw used tissues in the trash right away.
- Keeping distance from others when out and about.
- Don’t smoke indoors or around others, especially babies.
- Get vaccinated.

People with symptoms can be cared for at home unless the symptoms become severe and involve weakness. People with severe symptoms should seek medical advice from their health provider.

The best way to protect yourself, your family and your community is to get the flu and COVID vaccine. Vaccines help reduce the risk of getting a virus, severe illness or death. Check your immunization status and if it's not up to date.

The flu vaccine can be given at any time during the flu season. Unlike some vaccines that provide long-term immunity, the flu vaccine must be taken annually. It is safe to

receive both the flu and COVID-19 vaccines. Although the two illnesses share similar symptoms and can cause more severe illness when someone is infected with both, this does not affect vaccine safety. Getting both vaccines provides the best protection against serious illness.

The flu vaccine is also available at all community health centres and public health units in Nunavut. Call your local healthcare provider to book an appointment.

For more information about influenza and COVID-19, visit the Government of Nunavut website.

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