December 14, 2022—The health and safety of our school community is our top priority and Tulare County has recommended we share this information with our families as we enter the winter and holiday season.

<u>Public Advisory: Preventing Severe Winter Illnesses</u>

Our local hospitals are overwhelmed with high numbers of patients with winter respiratory illnesses right now. Doing our part to prevent severe illness helps support our community hospitals so they are best able to care for us when it is most needed.

As a reminder, we often can get exposed to respiratory viruses from those closest to us—so it is important that everyone take precautions this winter to keep the entire family healthy, especially if you or someone in your home is at higher risk for severe illness.

If you or a family member are sick: It may be COVID-19, flu, or another virus like RSV.
- ➢ Many times this can be managed at home, getting evaluated as needed at your clinic or remotely with a telehealth provider—this helps keep our ERs open for emergencies.
- ➢ Some people are at-risk for severe illness so may need extra precautions: Babies, children under 5, older adults, and persons who are pregnant or have health conditions (asthma, heart problems, a weakened immune system, or other health risks).

For sick babies and children, **Valley Children's recommends to stay home and call your pediatrician unless your child has symptoms that may need emergency care such as:**
- ➢ Trouble breathing *(click here to learn what breathing difficulty can look like in babies)*
- ➢ Difficulty keeping fluids down
- ➢ Trouble staying alert or waking up
- ➢ Blue colored lips or face
- ➢ Persistent chest pain or pressure

Stay home (away from others), test for COVID-19 and get treated if the test is positive.
- ➢ Most adults with mild or moderate symptoms should get treatment ASAP to prevent severe illness. The pills work by stopping the virus from multiplying in your body, which may help you test negative sooner and lower risk of long COVID symptoms.
- ➢ If you test positive, call your doctor or get a free COVID-19 telehealth visit with Sesame Care online (sesamecare.com/COVID) or via phone at 833-686-5051.
- ➢ Insurance covers store-bought COVID-19 tests every month and free COVID-19 testing is also available in multiple locations throughout Tulare County.

If you test negative for COVID-19 <u>or</u> still need care:
- ➢ Call your clinic if you have one, especially if you are at higher risk for severe illness.
- ➢ If you don't have a doctor or clinic: Try urgent care or a nurse advice line and telehealth to get evaluated without leaving your home—often same day (many insurances have telehealth or nurse advice lines included; some services like Sesame Care offer free or low-cost visits online)

➢ Go to the ER or call 9-1-1 if you feel you are experiencing a medical emergency such as trouble breathing, confusion, or chest pain.

Keep up general winter illness prevention to protect your entire family:
➢ Get vaccinated for COVID-19 and flu—including COVID-19 boosters once eligible— especially if you or a family member are at higher risk to get severely sick. Please note: there is no vaccine for RSV.
➢ Wash your hands often and clean commonly touched surfaces at home.
➢ Wear a mask indoors around others, especially if you or a family member are at higher risk to get severely sick.
➢ If you are sick, stay home; isolate from others at home and wear a mask if you cannot.
➢ Get treated early to prevent severe illness, especially if you are at higher risk.

Where to Find More Health Information

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
- COVID-19: Facts about Treatment / When to Get Treatment
- RSV: Symptoms/ Caring for Your Child at Home / When to Seek Care
- (Video) RSV, Flu, or COVID-19?
- (Video) Stay Healthy this Winter: Tips to Protect Yourself and Your Family
- Visit myturn.ca.gov or call 1-833-422-4255 for vaccine appointments and walk-in clinics

Valley Children's Healthcare
- Preventing Flu, RSV, COVID-19, and other Respiratory Illnesses this Winter
- Keeping Infants Safe from RSV

American Association of Pediatrics
- COVID, Flu, and RSV: How Are These Respiratory Illnesses Different?
- Coughs and Colds: Medicines or Home Remedies [for Children]
- (Video) Signs of RSV in Babies and (Video) Protect Your Child from the Flu

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- Flu Antiviral Treatment and Who is At Higher Risk for Severe Flu Illness
- RSV: Symptoms and Care and RSV in Infants and Young Children
- (Managing symptoms) How to Feel Better: Sore Throat
- (Managing symptoms) How to Feel Better: Common Cold Symptoms
- (Managing symptoms) How to Feel Better: Chest Cold Symptoms
- (Managing symptoms) How to Feel Better: Stuffy Nose & Sinus Symptoms

GOT COVID-19?

Free Treatments Are Available

Safe & Effective

- Prevent hospitalization and death.
- Start treatment early.
- And remember to isolate to prevent infecting others.

Scan this QR code for what to do if you test positive for COVID-19.

OPTION A: Talk to your health care provider.

OPTION B: If you can't reach them within 24 hours, speak to someone over phone or video call for free.

Call 833-686-5051 or make an appointment at sesamecare.com/covidca.

CDPH