

Image not found or type unknown

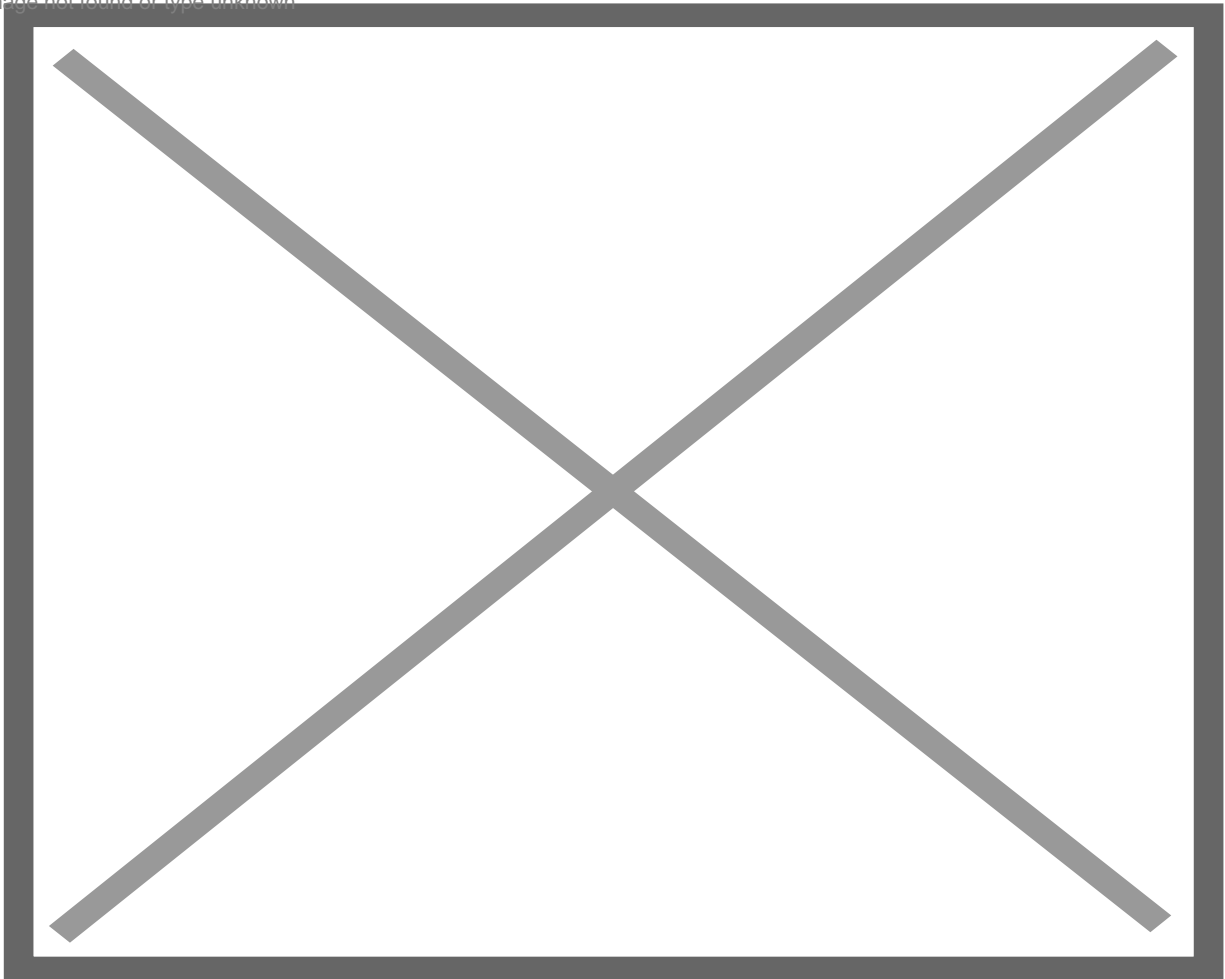
CDC Aligns Covid-19 With Seasonal Viruses

New recommendations advise treating Covid-19 similarly to the flu, emphasizing symptom management and masking post-recovery

Coronavirus / **Published On March 02, 2024 04:42 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 02, 2024**

Image not found or type unknown



Woman on a train wearing a mask. By. GETTY IMAGES

In a significant shift in public health policy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Friday released new guidelines that align Covid-19 precautions with those for influenza and other respiratory viruses. This marks a pivotal moment in the management of Covid-19, nearly four years after the pandemic began.

According to the CDC, individuals with Covid-19 are now advised to stay home until they are fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and notice an improvement in symptoms. Afterward, for the next five days, it is recommended to wear a mask

and limit close contact with others, mirroring the precautions for flu.

Dr. Brendan Jackson, head of the CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease, emphasized that while Covid-19 remains a significant public health concern, it no longer constitutes the emergency it once did. "Its health impacts increasingly resemble those of other [respiratory viral] illnesses, including influenza and RSV," Dr. Jackson stated.

The guidance arrives as many Americans, schools, and workplaces had already begun treating Covid-19 with a more routine approach, diverging from previously stricter CDC recommendations. The medical community advocates for the use of common sense: individuals feeling sick should stay home, and those with lingering symptoms should consider wearing masks indoors, especially around vulnerable populations.

Despite the normalization of Covid-19 precautions, the CDC's Dr. Mandy Cohen and other health experts caution that the virus still presents a greater risk than the flu, contributing to over 1,000 deaths weekly and the persistent challenge of long Covid. The CDC also note that healthcare settings, including nursing homes, are exempt from the relaxed guidelines, and high-risk groups should seek professional advice if symptomatic.

Regular flu deaths, according to the CDC, has been low as 12,000 annually and as high as 52,000 between the years 2010-2020, mirroring current Covid-related deaths during higher infection rate years.

On the topic of isolation and vaccination, the CDC suggests a pragmatic approach. According to WSJ, Dr. Peter Chin-Hong of the University of California San Francisco points out the strengthened immunity in the population due to previous infections and vaccinations. For most, an annual Covid-19 vaccine is recommended, akin to the flu shot schedule, with particular emphasis on boosters for seniors and tailored guidance for those with compromised immune systems.

The CDC's comprehensive update reflects the evolving understanding of Covid-19 and its management, advocating for continued vigilance while acknowledging the progress made in integrating the virus into the broader context of respiratory viral diseases.