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Hawai'i Department of Health issues new guidance on staying safe from respiratory viruses

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HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) has released new guidance for staying safe from respiratory viruses, including the virus that causes COVID-19.

DOH's new guidance is presented in a broader context of respiratory viruses. It closely aligns with the latest [respiratory virus guidelines](#) released earlier this month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Hawai'i-specific guidance underscores the continued importance of taking steps to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses in the community and of early detection for those at higher risk of severe disease.

DOH continuously reviews data on respiratory pathogens. With respiratory viruses circulating throughout the year in Hawai'i, the new guidance can be applied to COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), among others. While the guidance is changing, COVID-19 still poses a significant threat to public health and can cause severe disease for older adults or individuals with compromised immune systems. Respiratory virus guidance has not changed in health care settings.

"The new DOH guidance continues to emphasize staying up to date on vaccinations, staying home when sick, and masking as valuable tools to reduce spread of respiratory viruses including COVID-19," said DOH State Epidemiologist Dr. Sarah Kemble. "Other key strategies are covering your mouth when coughing, washing your hands frequently,

taking steps for cleaner air, and testing and getting treatment if you are at higher risk for severe disease. We can all work together to slow the spread of respiratory viruses and protect those who are most vulnerable.”

To read more about the DOH’s new guidance, visit the Disease Outbreak Control Division’s respiratory viruses webpage: <https://health.hawaii.gov/docd/disease-types/respiratory-viruses/>

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