

Diseases and conditions reported during March 3 – March 16, 2024:

This report is a bimonthly snapshot of communicable diseases reported in El Paso County, as well as a report of disease trends and local health alerts. El Paso County Public Health's (EPCPH) Communicable Disease Program partners with the medical community and the public to limit and reduce the spread of diseases in our community.

Reportable diseases and conditions:

- 10 Animal Bites – 7 pediatric, 3 adults; 0 recommended to receive rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP)
- 4 Campylobacteriosis – 2 pediatric, 2 adults
- 2 Carbapenem-Resistant Enterobacterales (CRE) - adults
- 5 Carbapenem-Resistant Pseudomonas Aeruginosa (CRPA) - adults
- 12 COVID-19, hospitalized – 1 pediatric, 11 adults
- 1 Cryptosporidiosis – adult
- 1 Giardiasis - adult
- 2 Haemophilus influenzae – adults
- 4 Invasive Strep Pneumoniae – 2 pediatric, 2 adults
- 1 Mpox - adult
- 4 Pertussis – adults
- 25 RSV, hospitalized – 10 pediatric, 15 adults
- 4 Salmonellosis - adults
- 4 Shigellosis – 2 pediatric, 2 adults
- 1 STEC (Shiga Toxin Producing E.coli) - adult
- 8 Varicella – 4 pediatric, 4 adults
- 1 Vibriosis - adult

Additional reports:

- Animals positive for rabies 2024 Year to Date: 0
 - Hospitalized Influenza since Oct. 1, 2023: 493 Total (378 Influenza A, 100 Influenza B, and 15 Unsubtyped)
 - Outbreaks reported:
 - 1 conjunctivitis outbreak associated with a school
 - 3 influenza outbreaks associated with schools and a child care facility
 - 3 respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) outbreaks associated with a school and child care facilities
 - 4 unknown gastrointestinal (GI) illness outbreaks associated with a school, child care facility, restaurant, and long-term care facility (LTCF)
 - 1 varicella outbreak associated with a child care facility
- *COVID-19 outbreaks in LTCF are not included in this summary

For a list of reportable diseases and conditions and instructions on how to report, use this [link](#).

Health News: Updated CDC Respiratory Virus Recommendations – Changes for COVID-19 Isolation

- On March 1, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released updated [recommendations for respiratory viruses](#), unifying recommendations for COVID-19 with other common respiratory viral illnesses, such as influenza and RSV. Of particular interest, the recommendation for a minimum five-day isolation for those ill with COVID-19 infection has been removed and replaced.
- The current recommendation for people who get sick with respiratory virus symptoms, including COVID-19:
 - Stay home and away from others upon illness onset.
 - Ill individuals can return to normal activities when they are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of a fever-reducing medication) and symptoms are improving.
 - Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take additional precautions for five days after illness onset, such as wearing a well-fitting mask, keeping distance from others, enhancing hand washing practices, and getting testing to inform actions to prevent spread to others.
- General respiratory virus prevention strategies include:
 - Staying up to date with vaccination, which protects against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. This includes flu, COVID-19, and RSV if eligible. Vaccination is particularly important for older adults and those with chronic health conditions.
 - Practicing good hygiene: cover coughs and sneezes, wash or sanitize hands often, and clean frequently touched surfaces.
 - Taking steps for cleaner air: bring in more fresh outside air, purify indoor air, or gather outdoors.
- This updated guidance is intended for a general audience and community settings. **CDC's COVID-19 guidance for health care settings has not changed** (although it is currently under review). Stay up-to-date with guidance for Healthcare Personnel with COVID-19 infection or exposure, available [HERE](#).
- Why did CDC make changes to COVID-19 guidance now?
 - Adopting a streamlined, unified approach for respiratory virus infection makes recommendations easier to understand and more likely to be followed.
 - More than 98 percent of the US population now has some degree of protective immunity against COVID-19 from vaccination, prior infection or both.
 - Weekly hospital admissions for COVID-19 have decreased by more than 75 percent and deaths by more than 90 percent compared to January 2022, and these decreases have continued through a full respiratory virus season, despite levels of viral activity similar to prior years. More severe COVID-19 impacts are now similar to other respiratory viruses.
 - States (Oregon and California) that already had changed their isolation guidance to recommendations similar to CDC's updated recommendations are not experiencing higher COVID-19 test positivity, emergency department visits, or hospitalizations.
 - Full background information on CDC's updated respiratory guidance can be found [HERE](#).

Respiratory Virus Guidance Snapshot

Core prevention strategies

- Immunizations
- Hygiene
- Steps for Cleaner Air
- Treatment
- Stay Home and Prevent Spread*

Additional prevention strategies

- Masks
- Distancing
- Tests

Layering prevention strategies can be especially helpful when:

- ✓ Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in your community
- ✓ You or those around you have risk factors for severe illness
- ✓ You or those around you were recently exposed, are sick, or are recovering

***Stay home and away from others until, for 24 hours BOTH:**

- Your symptoms are getting better
- You are fever-free (without meds)

Then take added precaution for the next 5 days

Questions? Please Contact:

El Paso County Public Health CD/TB Program
Hours: M-F, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
(719) 578-3220; after-hours emergency: (719) 235-2278
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
(303) 692-2700; after-hours emergency: (303) 370-9395
www.elpasocountyhealth.org
Reportable Diseases and Conditions List