



Prevention Measures for the Cold and Flu Season

November 8, 2022

1) Our guiding principle:

As we enter the cold and flu season, coming on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, the archdiocese invites pastors and parish pastoral councils to consider the following recommendations regarding measures intended to prevent or minimize the impact of the cold and flu symptoms, as well as those of the latest variants of COVID-19.

After two years of pandemic, we are all quite familiar with the fundamentals of COVID prevention, which applies equally to colds and the flu – masks, social distancing, hand washing, disinfection of hands, staying home when sick, etc.

Our guiding principle is that, **with the exception that the communion cup is not to be offered at this time**, it is up to parish leadership to discuss which measures should be taken, according to the parish's needs at the present moment and/or according to a change in the level of cold/flu/COVID-19 symptoms in the general public. These considerations should be made in all charity, with the good of all in mind.

2) Measures

The Distribution of Communion should be handled as it was before the pandemic, with the exception that **the communion cup is not yet to be offered**. Our diocese however continues to recommend that presiders, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Communion wear masks when distributing Communion.

Clergy and lay people should also wear a mask when visiting the sick and when administering Sacraments that require a close face-to-face proximity.

The Sign of Peace can be done with the shaking of hands or continue to be expressed with a head bow or a friendly, respectful wave toward others in the assembly, according to the comfort level of each individual.

Masks – The wearing of masks is one of the most effective prevention tools in fighting the flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses including the common cold. Our diocese continues to recommend mask wearing by parishioners, when it is necessary for the well-being of all and vulnerable persons, while respecting the choice of each parishioner to discern whether they choose to do so.

Sanitization – Hand sanitizing stations should be made available at the entrances. We continue to recommend their use.

Ventilation – Since proper ventilation is key in the prevention of COVID, colds, flu and other respiratory illnesses, parishes should study the need of improving their ventilation system.

Livestreaming – If equipment is still in place, the livestreaming of Masses should continue in order to benefit members of the community who cannot attend Mass, such as the ill, the shut-ins or those in personal care homes, etc.

When Sick – Any active member of the liturgical team, and in particular presiders, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Communion, exhibiting cold or flu-like symptoms are strongly encouraged to stay home and find a replacement for their assigned ministry.

We encourage all parishioners to stay home if sick, and remind everyone that if you are sick, it is prudent to isolate and do rapid antigen testing. Our recent pandemic experience reinforces the importance of continuing with the fundamentals, in a spirit of charity towards all.

3) APPENDIX - “A New COVID Normal?” – Doctors Manitoba Web Page

As COVID-19 continues to be of concern to many, we recommend that parishes and individuals consult the Doctors Manitoba page on living with COVID-19 after the pandemic. We invite parishes to share it in their electronic bulletins, websites, and social media: [Doctors Manitoba | A New COVID Normal?](#)

The page is regularly updated and contains information and science-based advice for individuals in a post-COVID world, such as: masks, vaccination, reconnecting with others gradually, and persons at increased risk.

4) APPENDIX – Canada Health Vaccination Information

Canada Health has posted information to help organizations ensure solid public health measures and to help families stay up to date with their vaccinations.

[COVID-19: Share information about vaccination and public health measures at your community event](#)

[COVID-19: Stay up to date with your vaccinations](#)

[Vaccinating children against COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 vaccinations for children \(YouTube video\)](#)

God bless, and thank you,

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