



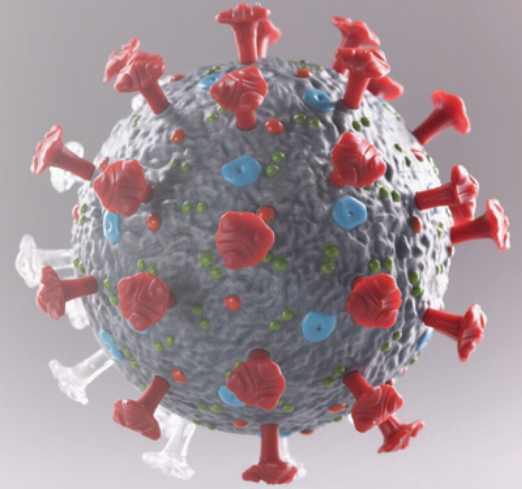
BROWN MEDICINE

Insider

Fall 2024

How to Manage COVID-19 this Flu Season

As we transition into fall and flu season, COVID-19 remains a point of concern.



With evolving variants and rising cases in certain areas, it's essential to stay informed on best practices for protecting our health. Dr. Kevin Gibas, Division of Infectious Diseases at Brown Medicine, shares ways to manage the potential rise of cases.

“One of the biggest things I want people to know is that the vaccines for COVID, flu, and if you’re eligible for RSV, are important things we can do to keep not only ourselves, but our families, our loved ones, and our patients safe,” says Dr. Gibas.

He emphasizes the importance of protecting our communities through immunization, particularly as the flu and RSV circulate alongside COVID-19.

Dr. Gibas also highlights recent developments regarding COVID-19 vaccines, explaining that “Just recently, the FDA approved and authorized two COVID vaccines for the 2024/25 season. Those are both from Moderna or Pfizer, so we do recommend that once those become available, you talk to your doctor or healthcare provider if those make sense for you. They are recommended and approved for most people 6 months and older.”

In addition to vaccination, preventive measures like hand-washing remain crucial. “We encourage everybody to wash their hands. The CDC says and data supports this—that washing your hands is the single most important thing we can do as healthcare providers to stop the spread of disease in hospital settings,” he advises.

As we prepare for another challenging respiratory virus season, staying informed and proactive through vaccination and good hygiene can help keep our communities protected. If you have any questions about vaccines or flu season, reach out to your healthcare provider for guidance.



Check out this video to hear Dr. Gibas share best practices when approaching Covid-19 this fall.

World Alzheimer's Day: Raising Awareness and Support

World Alzheimer's Day is a global reminder of the critical need to address the growing crisis of Alzheimer's disease and dementia. These conditions **affect millions worldwide**, placing immense physical, emotional, and financial burdens on individuals and families.

Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, is characterized by memory loss, confusion, and cognitive decline. Early detection is crucial. Symptoms to be aware of include difficulty remembering recent events, disorientation, personality changes, and challenges with problem-solving or communication.

While there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, treatment focuses on slowing its progression and managing symptoms. The National Institute of Aging states that several prescription drugs are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to help either manage symptoms or treat the disease.

Most FDA-approved drugs, including cholinesterase inhibitors and NMDA receptor antagonists, work best for individuals in the early or middle stages of Alzheimer's. Through its compassionate and comprehensive care, the Division of Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine continues to support the fight against Alzheimer's, providing valuable resources and expertise to the community.

Yasin Abul MD, ScM, director of Geriatrics Ambulatory Care and Home Care Program, explains that Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that slowly impairs

memory and thinking skills, and eventually the ability to carry out simple tasks. Although there is no cure, early detection and management with comprehensive care can significantly improve quality of life for those affected individuals.

Stefan Gravenstein MD, MPH, a distinguished researcher and Division Director of Geriatrics & Palliative Medicine, emphasizes that vaccination against respiratory infections may play an important role in preventing cognitive decline. Respiratory infections can exacerbate cognitive impairment in individuals with Alzheimer's, and recent data with COVID suggests it may increase risk for developing Alzheimer's. So, preventing respiratory infections is crucial. Encouraging healthy lifestyle choices, including physical activity, infection prevention, a balanced diet, and regular medical check-ups, can also contribute to maintaining cognitive health.

If you notice any signs of Alzheimer's in yourself or someone you know, don't ignore them. Schedule an appointment with your healthcare provider.



Division of Geriatrics and Palliative care at our Brown Physicians Patient Center in East Providence

Colon Cancer: Screening Age, Early Signs and Resources

According to the National Cancer Institute, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, with increasing diagnoses in individuals between the ages of 40 and 49.

As a result, national health guidelines have recently lowered the recommended screening age for adults at average risk from 50 to 45.

Colon cancer can develop with few or no symptoms until it has advanced, making early detection crucial. Regular screenings can catch cancer in its earliest stages, when treatment is most effective and the chances of a full recovery are significantly higher.

If you're under 45 and experiencing any of the following symptoms, **talk to your doctor about getting screened:**

- Bright red rectal bleeding
- Persistent changes in bowel habits (diarrhea, constipation, or stool narrowing) lasting more than a few days
- A feeling of incomplete bowel movements
- Blood in the stool, making it appear dark brown or black
- Cramping or abdominal pain
- Unexplained weight loss

Don't wait until it's too late—schedule your screening today and take control of your health.

COLON CANCER IS

**Preventable,
Treatable,
Beatable.**

Get Screened for Colon Cancer.

Forty-Five or Older?
Unsure if you are at increased risk?

Talk to your Primary Care Provider!



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62 Amara Street, East Providence, RI | (491) 649-4030 | brownmed.org/colonoscopy



Before flu season peaks, now is the perfect time to get the flu shot to protect yourself and others. Contact your healthcare provider today to schedule your vaccination and stay healthy this fall and winter.



Employee of the Quarter

Congratulations to Reyna Funes, Brown Medicine's Employee of the Quarter! Over her five years with us, Reyna has shown incredible dedication and growth, starting as a Payroll Coordinator and advancing to Payroll Supervisor. Her commitment to excellence is truly appreciated, and we're proud to celebrate her success at Brown Medicine.

Thank you, Reyna, for your great work!

Reyna Funes | Payroll Supervisor

EVENT

Brown Medicine Makes a Splash at Dragon Boat Races



Brown Medicine recently participated in the 23rd Annual Rhode Island Chinese Dragon Boat Races. Sponsored by Brown Physicians, Inc., the team featured several members representing Brown Medicine, including Nancy Cordeiro, Amanda Gomes, Diane Metz, Katie Sharkey, MD, Melinda Diaz, Giovanna Mercurio, and Ian Sandham.

The team took part in the Breast Cancer Race, which raises crucial funds for breast cancer research. As first-time participants, the team placed 2nd in their heat (Goat Division), demonstrating team spirit and commitment to health both on and off the water!

EVENT

Women Leading Change



Brown Medicine sponsored the Women Leading Change event hosted by Women's Fund RI, underscoring our commitment to empowering women in leadership. The event took place at Bally's Twin River on September 18th. Several of our employees attended, representing Brown Medicine as we supported the important mission of advancing equity and opportunity for women across Rhode Island. They raised \$75,000 to support their mission to level the playing field for women and girls. *Women's Fund of Rhode Island (WFRI) invests in women and girls through research, advocacy, grant making, and strategic partnerships designed to achieve gender equity through systemic change. Their work lays the foundation for a more equitable Rhode Island and has made our state a national leader in public policies that are good for women and families.*

RECOGNITION

Mentorship Program

The fourth cohort of the Brown Medicine Mentorship Program wrapped up on September 24th with a festive luncheon.

This year the program was guided by MENTOR Rhode Island, a non-profit organization dedicated to the expansion of quality mentoring services for Rhode Island youth. Being our first full-year program, MENTOR RI provided training and guidance throughout the year with overwhelmingly positive professional and personal outcomes. The program follows a structure where both the Mentor and Mentee collaborate on defining the purpose and goals of meeting regularly. It's a great opportunity for mentees to learn more about all the benefits provided at Brown Medicine, develop their own personal and professional pathways as well as providing intangible benefits for our Mentors to share experiences, coach, and guide people outside the normal day-to-day circles.



Mentors/Mentees of the Brown Medicine Mentorship Program

BROWN MEDICINE IS A NONPROFIT, ACADEMIC, MULTI-SPECIALTY MEDICAL GROUP WITH LOCATIONS TO SERVE PATIENTS THROUGHOUT RHODE ISLAND.



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