



# THE DISPATCH

Safety | Health Services | Chaplain Corps



September 2023

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The Dispatch is for informational purposes. Unit Safety Officers are encouraged to use the articles in The Dispatch as topics for their monthly safety briefings and discussions. Members may go [eServices - Learning Management System](#), click on "Go to AXIS," search for this month's The Dispatch, take the quiz, and receive safety education credit.

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*The Theme for This Month's Dispatch is Communicable Disease Awareness.*

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## Respiratory Season is Right Around the Corner!

By: Maj Gerry Creager  
CAP, Dep. Program Manager, Health Services

Fall is the time when we usually start seeing the onset of respiratory virus season. Just like last year, we're anticipating a "triple threat" this year: an increase in flu, RSV and COVID illnesses.

**Flu, (Influenza)**, is the old standby, a familiar acquaintance we've seen year after year - except in 2020 and 2021 when isolation and masking apparently reduced its incidence across the entire world. It is still a significant illness and continues to cause serious illness in thousands each year.

**RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)** is something we used to think of as solely a disease in babies, but it's made a comeback in older adults now. And because of the COVID-reduction tactics, a lot of kids had a year or two where they did not get the virus in the normal timeframe.

**COVID, (SARS-CoV-2)** has settled down in the last year. Some mutations have produced an apparently milder disease and folks are tired of the restrictions a pandemic can create, however, there's evidence the virus isn't tired of us just yet.

Vaccines have continued to be a boon to disease and death prevention. Not all vaccines are equally effective at preventing infection, or even preventing transmission, but most or all of them can reduce the possibility of more severe disease and death - if people take advantage of them. In fact, they are our best method of preventing the more severe consequences. We've had flu vaccines for years, but the uptake (percentage of eligible people seeking vaccination) has hovered at or near 50 percent for a long time. Lots of people claim they don't need a vaccine, or they get the flu from the vaccine, neither of which is, from a public health viewpoint, accurate. There is substantial evidence pointing to the benefits of influenza vaccination.

There hasn't been an available RSV vaccine before now, but there are several in the works. One is, or will soon be available for infants, and for adults ages 60+. Infants should be vaccinated to prevent serious respiratory illness and complications; adults are encouraged to consult with their doctor, but it appears that many older adults were benefited by being vaccinated.

COVID has proven a little more difficult to pin down because the virus continues to mutate/change rapidly. People who were vaccinated with the original monovalent vaccines or the bivalent version last fall, have shown better results in terms of long-term immunity, and reduced incidence of severe disease than those who were not vaccinated. A new booster/vaccine is coming out based on the more recent COVID variant and is expected to provide additional immunity and further reduction of severe disease for the current round of COVID.

**WHEN you receive these vaccines is also important.**

Most people who are familiar with infectious disease and public health are recommending getting the COVID and RSV vaccines as soon as they're available, while delaying the flu vaccine until October. We are currently in a minor (at least so far) wave for COVID, so getting a little extra help is a good idea. The RSV vaccine protection appears to remain strong for quite a while. However, the flu vaccine has a shorter effective period before immune protection wanes, so getting vaccinated a little later, (but before you get sick!) is a reasonable strategy.

So, we would recommend that you talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider about these vaccines and determine what's right for you.

## Contagious Diseases: Decision Making and Action Taking

By: Ch Major Michael Morison, PCR-001

### **Ethical Perspective:**

From an ethical perspective there are a few guiding principles that should guide one in the decision-making process. When dealing with contagious diseases, one is free to act on an informed conscience.

### **Simply stated:**

1. Your decision should be an informed decision based on your beliefs and values. This means that you have reviewed the material from all sides (perspectives) of the matter, both scientific and ethical, to reach a conclusion.
2. Your challenge is to use balanced thinking in your decision-making process. How do you balance your beliefs and values system with the need to best care for yourself and your wingmen? What are the potential positive and negative ramifications for my decisions and for my wingmen?
3. Scientific information in a dynamic situation, especially with new contagions and will always be the best information available from science at that moment. Science can be expected to change as research and information changes and is appropriately updated.
4. It is important to continue to monitor newly updated information as it becomes available. Current information may cause you to revisit your position.

### **Action Step Considerations:**

You will need to make decisions about how to best protect yourself, and based on your beliefs and values, what actions you can take to best protect your wingmen. It is important to recognize that any organization has a responsibility to protect their members. An organization must review all available resources and, like the individual, must address the same issues addressed above. In CAP, it has a responsibility to safeguard its ability to protect its members and assigned missions. As a result, the organization will often take a more cautious approach in decision making.

The challenge will be to balance one's responsibility to help keep the community safe, that is their fellow wingmen safe, while maintaining faithfulness to one's beliefs and values. The organization's leadership is tasked with this responsibility. Whether we agree or disagree with the organization's action, it is important to know why and how the leadership arrived at that decision. **Active listening, respectful dialogue, and understanding are necessary while communicating with individuals that have different feelings and opinions than yours.**

When dealing with contagious diseases and taking personal action, one can look at the guidance provided by Health Services and Safety. These groups provide thoughtful and neutral information for your safety and the safety of your wingmen. If you have difficulty in making your decision, understanding the decision of leadership, or grappling with your decision to act, then chaplains are available to assist you. The chaplain is your wingman. The chaplain is present to assist and support you in making your informed decision.

**\*\*\* It's Back to School ... Useful Article and Links on Back-to-School Safety. \*\*\***



### **Teen Sleep Deprivation**

By: 1st Lt. Julie Teel, GA-453

Sleep deprivation is a general term to describe a state caused by inadequate quantity or quality of sleep, including voluntary or involuntary sleeplessness. Sleep is as important to the human body as food and water, but most teens do not get enough sleep. This lack of sleep causes moodiness, irritability, frustration, and a lack of ability to regulate emotions and attention span. Lack of mood regulation can lead to increased anxiety, panic attacks, angry outbursts, impulsivity, and extreme reactions. Teens who do not get enough sleep are more likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, such as drinking, driving fast, and engaging in other dangerous activities including refusal to wear protective gear, believing that the dangers inherent in activities do not apply to them and that they are in some way invincible. Inadequate sleep also causes neurological issues such as problems with attention, memory, decision making, reaction time, and creativity.

**Teens who do not get enough sleep are more apt to get poor grades in school, fall asleep in school, and have school tardiness/absences.** They are at a higher risk for obesity and poor metabolic regulation and do not make good decisions about their health or eating habits. Because their body does not have the time to regulate, rebuild white cells and stabilize body chemicals during sleep, they are more likely to catch a cold or lose some of the ability to fight infection.

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated occurrence. Studies show that approximately six out of ten middle school students and seven out of ten high school students do not get sufficient sleep on school nights. Even as little as one hour too little sleep at night can

cause concentration and reaction time to suffer. This becomes potentially deadly when a teen is behind the wheel of a car. Research studies show that if a person is operating a vehicle with only four to five hours of sleep, it causes the same impaired reactions as driving drunk with twice the legal limit of alcohol, increasing the chance of a crash to ten times! Teens are repeatedly taught about the dangers of driving under the influence, but unfortunately, very little is taught about the dangers of driving with too little sleep. Studies from The Center for Disease Control (CDC) show that less than a third of the population don't even get as much as seven hours of sleep at night.

### **What is the recommended amount of sleep?**

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that teenagers between 13–18 years should get between eight to ten hours of sleep in a 24-hour period. Due to busy school, work, and extracurricular activity schedules, it can be difficult for teens to get enough sleep. In fact, many teens struggle with falling asleep at night. There are some techniques to help teens get the sleep that they need. Consistency is a key factor. Teens need to have a consistent sleep schedule. They need to go to sleep and get up at approximately the same time each day – *even on the weekends*. Limiting light and exposure to technology, including phones, TV, gaming devices, and computers for thirty to sixty minutes before bedtime helps their mind and body relax and go to sleep more efficiently. Creating a sleep space that is quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature will also help. Avoiding large meals and caffeine before bedtime helps the body and mind slow down to enable sleep. Getting adequate exercise during the day will also help with falling asleep better at night.

Society recognizes and teaches the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, but often sees an inadequate amount of sleep as an inconvenience that can be overcome with caffeine or extra sleep on the weekend. Educating teens about the consequences of not getting enough sleep and strategies that can help them improve may literally save their life.

### **Sources:**

- <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>
- <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/specialties/sleep-disorder>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/features/students-sleep.htm>
- <https://riseandshine.childrensnational.org/effects-of-sleep-deprivation>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about-sleep/sleep-hygiene.html>

**Direct Link:** [Teen Sleep Deprivation](#)

## Resourceful Links:

### Important school zone driving safety tips:

1. Always obey crossing guards, school zone speed limits, paying close attention to where they begin and end.
2. Be aware of crosswalks.
3. Review your [state's laws regarding school buses](#). In all states except Washington, all drivers **must stop** for a bus loading or unloading children, whether they are behind the bus or driving towards it.
4. Over [25,000 children are injured](#) in school zones each year, don't text, adjust your music, or look at your phone.
5. Car accidents are the [#1 cause of death](#) for teenagers, a [car guard](#) can help them be aware of and monitor their speed.

[25 Back to School Safety Tips](#) - This link also provides additional information whether kids are walking, biking, taking the bus, or getting a ride from someone, etc.

### Other school safety links:

- [5 Incredibly Important Back to School Safety Tips in Sep 2023 - OurFamilyWorld.com](#)
- [Ten Safety Tips to Follow as Students Head Back to School \(redcross.org\)](#)

## Additional Resourceful Links...

- [CAP Safety | Facebook](#) - If you're a CAP member and interested in safety discussion and collaboration, join CAP Safety on Facebook, where we welcome participation to grow our safety community.

### Bird and wildlife strikes:

- [FAA Wildlife Strike Database](#) - This database contains records of reported wildlife strikes since 1990. Information received from airlines, airports, pilots, Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MOR), incident/accident information, and other sources.
- [USAF - Avian Hazard Advisory System \(AHAS\) - Bird Strikes](#) - AHAS was constructed with the best available geospatial bird data to reduce the risk of bird collisions with aircraft. Its use for flight planning can reduce the likelihood of a bird collision but will not eliminate the risk.