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RSV, COVID, and Flu — A Tripledemic Surge



As the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, we're seeing the rise of a **tripledeemic**—concurrent surges of COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and influenza (the flu). The result? Severe cases of RSV landed many children and seniors in the hospital, overwhelming emergency rooms and putting extreme pressure on the healthcare system.

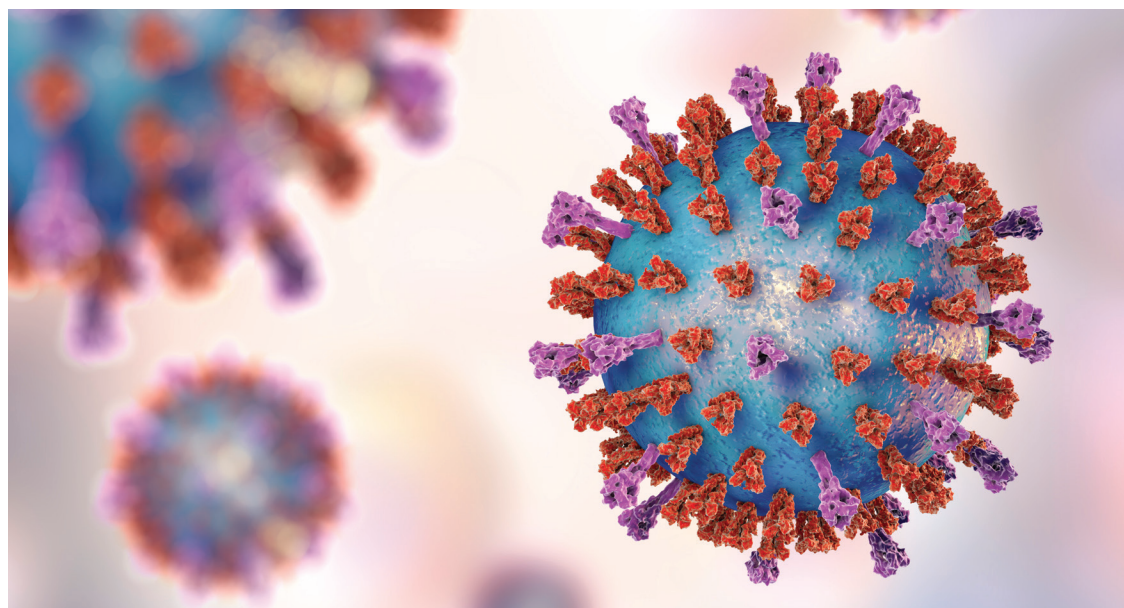
RSV is the unexpected culprit behind increased demand for emergency services at children's hospitals across the nation. The first hint that the typical RSV season might change became apparent when [Rabia Agha, MD](#), Division Director of Pediatric Infectious Disease, [Maimonides Children's Hospital](#) and other physicians at Maimonides reported "an unexpected, out of season rise in RSV infections during the spring of 2021."

At that time, they were unsure of what to expect in subsequent RSV seasons, especially following uncharacteristically mild RSV seasons in fall and winter 2020 and 2021 — likely a result of mask-wearing and social distancing campaigns to mitigate COVID-19 transmission.

Maimonides Prepared for a Surge in RSV Cases

Dedicated and proactive physicians, nurses, and staff in the [Maimonides' Pediatric Intensive Care Unit \(PICU\)](#) were ready when parents began seeking care for their children with severe RSV. Their preparations made all the difference for so many families in Brooklyn, and allowed them to treat up to twice as many PICU patients.

"We developed the ability to flex PICU capacity with additional beds to accommodate more children who needed intensive care," shared [Tsoline Kojaoghlanian, MD](#), Pediatric Infectious Disease Specialist, Maimonides Children's Hospital.



And they did all of this without compromising the high quality of care Maimonides patients expect.

RSV, a More Complex Health Concern for Children of All Ages

This year's sudden and severe outbreak of RSV may have set the stage for what's to come. Previous RSV seasons typically caused severe illness among children two years and younger, but that's not the case anymore.

"This year's RSV surge is concerning for a couple of reasons," Dr. Kojaoghlanian explains. "First, its earlier onset, and second, it's hospitalizing more older children than in previous RSV seasons."

Luckily, the COVID-19 surge hasn't led to additional hospitalizations among kids so far. "COVID numbers are increasing as the winter approaches, but it hasn't led to an increase in COVID-related admissions for children," said Dr. Agha.


Similarly, flu season began earlier this year, and Maimonides is seeing increased pediatric admissions as other hospitals have across the US. "We've started seeing pediatric flu admissions in the past few weeks, and are expecting high numbers to continue, as in other pre-pandemic influenza seasons," shared Dr. Kojaoghlanian.

Preventive measures may make all the difference.

The best way to keep kids healthy as experts continue monitoring the tripledemic is by taking appropriate precautions. There are several ways to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like these.

- ◆ Keep pediatric patients up to date with their vaccine schedule including seasonal influenza vaccine
- ◆ Emphasize handwashing for both parents and children.
- ◆ Encourage patients of all ages to stay home if they feel sick

Taking steps to prevent the spread of RSV, COVID-19, and the flu helps protect everyone in the community.

And if that fails, patients in Brooklyn can rely on the skilled healthcare providers at Maimonides for first-class care. 

Patients Get Timely Reproductive Care at Maimonides' Early Pregnancy Assessment Center

Reproductive healthcare is more accessible in Brooklyn than ever with the addition of Maimonides' Early Pregnancy Assessment Center (EPAC). It's a one-stop shop for [reproductive health and early pregnancy care](#). Many OB/GYNs have busy schedules that make it difficult to get a timely appointment, leaving newly pregnant patients with very few options. If they experience [troubling symptoms, like bleeding or abdominal pain](#), they often end up in the emergency department.



But EPAC provides another option for those in the early weeks of pregnancy. The Center's innovative approach provides immediate maternal and reproductive healthcare, while all but eliminating wait times. "We can accommodate next-day or sometimes same-day appointments," explains [June Ng, MD, MPH](#).

[Learn More](#)

“An Exciting Time in Neuromuscular Medicine” – Maimonides MDA Clinic Brings Specialized Muscular Dystrophy Care to Brooklyn

For patients with muscular dystrophy—a category of more than 30 diseases characterized by muscle weakness and progressive muscle loss—the odyssey toward diagnosis, then finding a skilled care team, can be a major challenge. “There aren’t many specialists trained to treat neuromuscular diseases, so clinics have long waiting lists and patients can’t necessarily travel to them,” explains [Nuri Jacoby, MD](#), Assistant Professor in the Department of Neurology. “Meanwhile, the symptoms they experience from their conditions can be profound, from the inability to walk to difficulty chewing or swallowing.”

To bridge this gap and bring expert care for patients with the wide range of neuromuscular conditions closer to home, Maimonides has established an [MDA Clinic](#) in partnership with SUNY Downstate, which is currently home to the only other MDA-certified clinic in the Brooklyn area. MDA Clinics are sponsored by the [Muscular Dystrophy Association](#) and reviewed annually to ensure they meet certain benchmarks of quality care and see enough patients to maintain their level of expertise. “The care we deliver here is multidisciplinary,” explains Dr. Jacoby. “A whole team of specialties, including neurology, rehabilitation, occupational and physical therapy, social work, cardiology, pulmonology, and orthopedics come together to provide comprehensive care for every aspect of these patients’ conditions.”

[Learn More](#)



Even during one of the busiest times of the year, especially in healthcare, many of our providers have been going above and beyond in terms of both field leadership and patient care.

BLOOD BANK REACHES 1000th Cross Match

Congratulations to our [Maimonides Blood Bank](#) team on the ongoing success of the Cross Match Reduction Program. The project reached its 1,000th cross match saved this month, after just launching this past summer. Using new technology and data analysis, this project has significantly reduced the need for unnecessary cross-matching, saving costly time and resources when matching patients for transfusions.

MAIMONIDES CANCER CARE, Here and Abroad

Since Covid, the [Maimonides Breast Center](#) livestreams their weekly meetings to several affiliate care centers, including the **Cancer Center at [Calabar University Hospital](#)** in Calabar, Nigeria. This collaboration allows doctors from other countries to learn from our patient case presentations. This particular connection emerged from Dr. Borgen and his former fellow (from MSKCC) Dr. Nat Usoro, who is currently at Calabar, where they are using their access to Maimonides experts to upgrade the quality of their breast cancer services.

DR. RICHARD SAVEL TAPPED to Join Physician Leadership Journal Editorial Board

[Richard Savel, MD](#), Maimonides Adult Critical Care Services Director and Vice-Chair for Inpatient Operations for the Department of Surgery, was recently invited to join the editorial board of the Physician Leadership Journal, the peer-reviewed publication of the American Association for Physician Leadership. He is one of 34 medical leaders nationwide currently on the board.

DR. JEFFREY NICASTRO INDUCTED INTO the American College of Surgeons Academy of Master Surgeon Educators

This year, the American College of Surgeons [Academy of Master Surgeon Educators](#) has inducted Maimonides Medical Center surgeon [Jeffrey Nicastro, MD](#). Only 65 surgeons across the United States and six other nations have received the honor of being a part of the program's fifth cohort.

Dr. Nicastro will participate as part of the team of surgeon educators advancing training, scholarship, collaboration, and mentorship in the field, with an emphasis on quality and patient safety.

DR. ALEJANDRO ZURETTI FEATURED in *Medical Laboratory Observer*

[Alejandro Zuretti, MD](#), Medical Director of Laboratories at Maimonides Medical Center, was [featured as a Laboratory Innovator](#) in the latest issue of the [Medical Laboratory Observer](#).

As part of this distinction, Dr. Zuretti shared his clinical experiences and challenges in an interview with the publication. He spoke about his positions as Lab Director at Maimonides, Director of Clinical Laboratories at SUNY Downstate Health Sciences University, and pathologist surveyor at The Joint Commission.

Thank You, Team Maimo!



Last November, Maimonides Health leadership and several community leaders gathered to take the opportunity to celebrate and thank our extraordinary staff for continuing to deliver excellent patient care. This consistent effort is not only recognized internally – organizations such as [Healthgrades have distinguished Maimonides Medical Center with high rankings](#) several years in a row.

“Maimonides is an exceptional hospital and hospital system,” said [Kenneth D. Gibbs, CEO of Maimonides Health](#). “The team here is second to none. That’s the truth. If you have a serious, life-threatening challenge, where it’s a matter of minutes or seconds, this is the place you need to be.”

Many supporters and friends from around the community came out to voice their appreciation for Team Maimo’s critical work, including leaders from [Chevra Hatzalah Volunteer Ambulance Service](#), [United Senior Center of Sunset Park](#), and the [Chinese-American Planning Council](#) of New York City.

[Learn More](#)

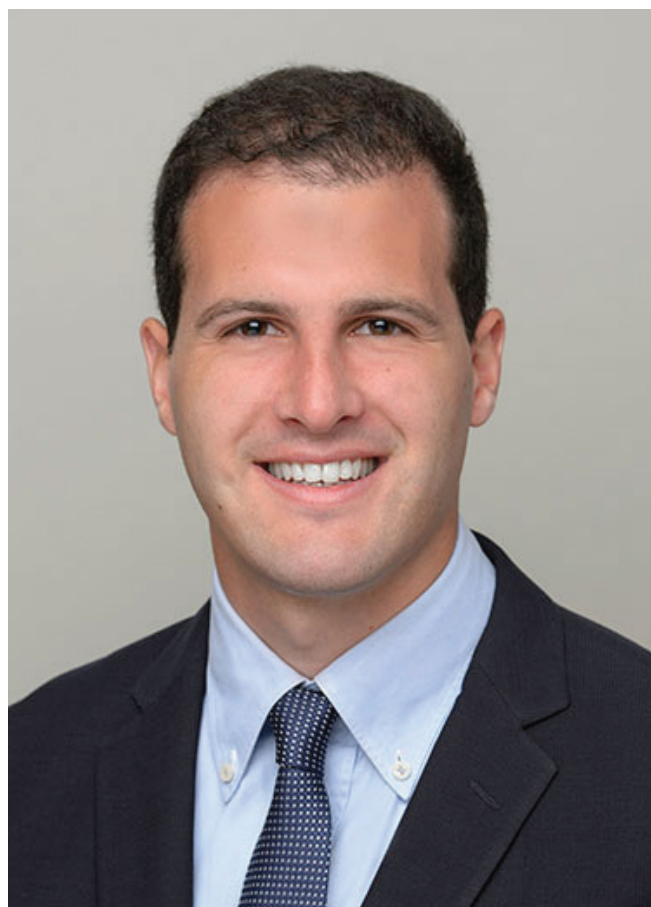
Isaac Gammal, MD, Advanced Orthopedic Surgeon, Joins Maimonides' Bone and Joint Center

Upper extremity surgery is high stakes and requires incredible skill. Patients can feel at ease putting their independence and quality of life in the hands of the team at Maimonides Bone and Joint Center, especially with the addition of Isaac Gammal, MD.

There's no doubt Dr. Gammal's extensive training in arthroscopic and microsurgery techniques at NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital and Zucker School of Medicine at Northwell, places him among the best orthopedic surgeons for upper extremity surgery across the nation. He is excited to join Team Maimo and bring his expertise back to his home turf in Brooklyn.

"I've done most of my training outside of the borough, so this is my first opportunity to care for my own community," Dr. Gammal said. "I'm also excited to be part of the expansion into new neighborhoods, including a Midwood office, which is my backyard."

[Learn More](#)

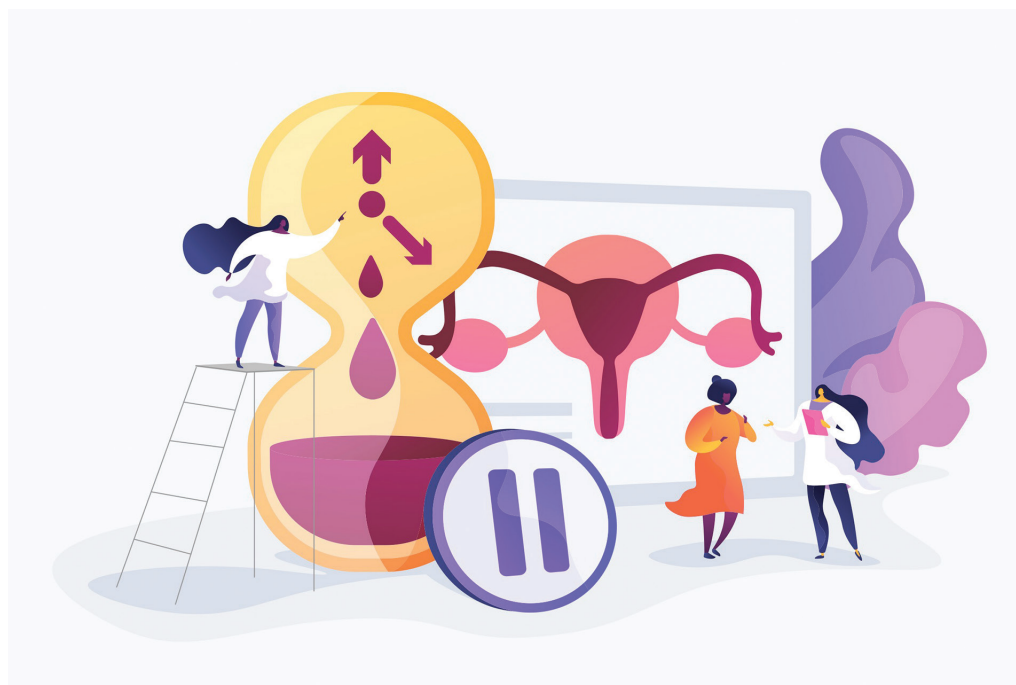


NEW PROVIDERS

December 2022

Mila Tempel, DO, Pediatric Gastroenterology, 718-283-7500

Hope Clennon, DO, Pediatric Endocrinology, 718-283-7500



Featured Podcast



Maimo MedTalk: Menopause 101

Every stage of a woman's life has its joys and its challenges.

[Lindsey Michel, MD](#), takes a deep dive into the stage of menopause and its unique place in a person's journey.

[Listen Here](#)