

Desert Lightning News

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Serving Southern Arizona's military community, including Davis-Monthan Air Force Base

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Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

BUSHWHACKER 22:07 TRAINING

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U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman William Turnbull

An HH-60G Pave Hawk assigned to the 563rd Rescue Group receives fuel before taking part in a rescue in the Pacific Ocean, Nov. 15, 2022. The 563rd RQG Airmen were dispatched to a cruise ship roughly 500 miles off the coast of San Diego to extract a man who was in critical condition from a ruptured appendix. Before executing the mission, two HC-130J Combat King IIs and crew departed Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, to Naval Air Station North Island, California, for crew change and gas.

563rd RQG Airmen provide lifesaving rescue

By Staff Sgt.
ALEX MILLER

355th Wing Public Affairs

Airmen from the 563d Rescue Group, 355th Wing, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, saved a Filipino national suffering from a ruptured appendix and sepsis onboard a cruise ship off the California Pacific Coast, Nov. 15.

The 563d RQG received the distress notification on the evening of Nov. 14. In preparation of the mission, 55th Rescue Generation Squadron maintainers responded to the short-notice task and generated two HH-60G Pave Hawks, assigned to the 55th Rescue Squadron, safe for flight the same night.

"Our goal is to generate mission ready aircraft at all times, day or night," said U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Colby Cantrell 55th RGS

flying crew chief. "The way our team responds to real world situations is a direct reflection of our readiness and dedication to the mission from the top down."

The rescue and maintenance teams landed at Naval Air Station North Island, California, shortly after the launch and awaited rested flying crews before executing the rescue mission the next morning.

This is where the 79th Rescue Squadron played a vital role in the mission. They flew two HC-130 Combat King IIs early morning the day of the rescue, landing at NAS North Island with the rested crew. When the assignment began, they also provided aerial refueling to the Pave Hawks during the mission over the Pacific.

"I'm proud of the work our rescue Airmen do," said U.S. Air Force Col. Jose Cabrera, 563d RQG commander. "The lives of those in

need depend on it, and this is the mission we are here to do. We make sure someone's worst day isn't their last."

The patient was successfully rescued and then transferred to Scripps Hospital in San Diego for mission conclusion where he received care.

"The successful execution of this mission would not have been possible without the help from every part of the team," said U.S. Air Force Capt. Avery Ekebrecht, 55th RQS HH-60G pilot. "At the end of the day, it is about the team working together safely and efficiently to give the patient the best chance of survival."

This undertaking demonstrated one of the ways Davis-Monthan's culture of readiness and problem-solving skills can support the greater joint force, our mission partners and local communities.



A U.S. Air Force Airman assigned to the 563rd Rescue Group observes an HH-60G Pave Hawk receive aerial refueling over the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego, Nov. 15.



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 563rd Rescue Group gather their equipment and prepare to board one of their HH-60G Pave Hawks at Coronado, California, Nov. 15.

Desert Lightning News

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DECON training course held at Davis-Monthan



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman William Turnbull

Participants and proctors for a decontamination training course pose for a photo at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3, 2022. This decontamination course offers 15 continuing education hours while also certifying the Airmen in several qualifications.



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 355th Medical Group transport platforms for a decontamination training course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3. The 20 participants of this iteration of training are now certified in the U.S. Air Force Inplace Patient DECON Class and Hazardous Waste Operations.



U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 355th Medical Group prepare a decontamination tent for a mock patient at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3. The 20 participants of this iteration of training are now certified in the U.S. Air Force Inplace Patient DECON Class and Hazardous Waste Operations.



A decontamination tent is set up during a DECON training course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3.



LEFT: U.S. Air Force Airmen set up a decontamination tent during a DECON training course at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3, 2022.

F-105 combat pilots reunite one last time

By Tech. Sgt.
S.A. Gamboa

355th Wing Public Affairs

Former F-105 Thunderchief pilots and electronic warfare officers held a reunion at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 2-5, 2022.

After approximately 15 years of get-togethers, this reunion was arranged to have as many combat pilots and EWOs of the F-105, nicknamed “Thud,” come together one last time.

“Most of the guys are in their 80’s, so that’s the reason why this is the last one,” said retired U.S. Air Force Col. Thomas “Waldo” King, a former F-105 combat pilot and reunion coordinator.

Many of the veterans who came were assigned to the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing at Takhli Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand, during the mid-1960s to early 1970s, where they saw combat over Northern Vietnam during the war.

After the U.S. drawdown from Southeast Asia, the 355th TFW was inactivated from Takhli in 1970, reactivated at Davis-Monthan in 1971, and redesignated the 355th Wing in 2019.

For the last hoorah, King organized events that would make a lasting impression for those who were able to come.

“Only guys that logged combat time in the F-105 are here so it is a unique



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

Former F-105 Thunderchief pilots look at the memorial on the A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team aircraft at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3, 2022. They visited Davis-Monthan during an F-105 pilot reunion where they saw an A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team demo.

reunion,” said retired U.S. Air Force Col. Frank Peck, a former F-105 combat pilot. “Every time I’m near an aircraft, pilots or the flightline, I love it.”

Their first event on base, was watching

an A-10 Thunderbolt II Demonstration Team training demo.

What made this more unique, was that the A-10 that flew honors all 355th TFW pilots who were prisoners of war and

missing in action with a memorial and a Southeast Asia camouflage paint scheme; the same paint scheme the F-105 had.

“It was memorable,” said King about the demonstration. “Especially the right side, where they had the names of the POW and MIA F-105 pilots. It was an honor.”

Following that, they visited a couple of familiar squadrons.

Spanning across seven decades, deactivations and reactivations, the 354th and 357th Fighter Squadrons remain an integral part of the 355th; this being one of the main reasons to host their last stop at Davis-Monthan.

“The 355th was one of the combat wings at Takhli [AFB] Thailand, and it has two of the squadrons that were active then,” said King. “So that is why we decided to come here.”

They also set aside time to talk about the history of the 355th Wing and build camaraderie between present and past pilots.

“We came here to educate the young 355th pilots on the historical background of their wing and have them tell us what all their combat operations were after the 1970s,” King added.

They capped off their visit with an event at the Pima Air and Space Museum where they honored those who could not be there, one last time.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. S.A. Gamboa

Former F-105 Thunderchief pilots and their family members visit Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3. Because of the age of the group, it was decided this would be the last reunion.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Alex Miller

Former F-105 Thunderchief pilots and their family members look at a photo album at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3. Only veterans who logged combat time in the F-105 were at the reunion.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. S.A. Gamboa

Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Frank Peck, a former F-105 Thunderchief pilot, watches an aircraft at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Nov. 3, 2022. Peck visited Davis-Monthan during an F-105 pilot reunion.



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A-10 Thunderbolt II gets new paint



U.S. Air Force photos by Senior Airman Kaitlyn English

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to the 355th Equipment Maintenance Squadron aircraft structural maintenance paint an A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to the 357th Fighter Generation Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. The aircraft structural maintenance team re-painted and placed decals on this A-10 after a wing swap, adding 7,300 hours back into the flying program to continue completing missions, sorties, and countless training requirements.



U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Madison Colbert, 355th Equipment Maintenance Squadron aircraft structural maintenance apprentice, paints an A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to the 357th Fighter Generation Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Oct. 19, 2022. The 355th EMS provides nondestructive inspection, fabrication of aircraft components and corrosion control support, and stores, maintains, inspects and transports munitions stockpile.



U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Homar Salanga, 355th Equipment Maintenance Squadron aircraft structural maintenance apprentice, finalizes the decal on an A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to the 357th Fighter Generation Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, Oct. 20.

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\$20 million grand challenge aims to reduce Veteran suicides

Preventing Veteran suicide is VA's top clinical priority. Mission Daybreak is a \$20 million grand challenge to reduce Veteran suicides. It's part of VA's 10-year strategy to end Veteran suicide through a comprehensive, public health approach.

Thirty finalists in VA's Mission Daybreak presented their suicide prevention solutions at Demo Day, an in-person showcase event Nov. 4.

Twenty-three of the finalist teams include a Veteran or Veteran family member. Their solutions range from early-stage concepts to market-ready tools and programs, across focus areas:

- Four (13%) finalist solutions address lethal means safety.
- Eight (27%) seek to integrate with or build off the Veterans Crisis Line.
- Five (17%) utilize extended reality solutions.
- Additional solution concepts use artificial intelligence and machine learning to better identify and care for Veterans in crisis.

Finalists presented to judges at Demo Day

During Demo Day at the Samsung Executive Briefing Center, finalists had the opportunity to speak about their solutions with challenge judges and representatives from VA, VSOs and policy institutes. The judges bring a diversity of perspectives and experiences, from Veterans and clinicians



Courtesy photo

Attendees of Demo Day at the Samsung Executive Briefing Center mingle in the exhibition room. Finalists in the Mission Daybreak competition had the opportunity to speak about their solutions with challenge judges and representatives from VA, VSOs and policy institutes.

to social workers and technical experts. Amazon provided additional support for the event.

Dr. Matthew Miller, executive director for VA Suicide Prevention, discussed how the challenge is inspiring unique suicide prevention solutions specifically designed for Veterans to drive real impact in addressing this health crisis.

Diverse range of suicide prevention solutions for Veterans

Suicide has no single cause, and no single strategy can end this complex problem. To be effective, prevention solutions must

meet individuals where they are instead of a one-size-fits-all approach.

To address the many causes of suicide, Mission Daybreak called for innovative solutions across a range of focus areas. VA received more than 1,300 concept submissions from Veterans, VSOs, community-based organizations, health tech companies, startups and universities in its effort to help transform the way the country addresses suicide.

Mission Daybreak announced the 30 finalists advancing to the Phase 2 virtual accelerator program in September. The

finalists' solutions range from technology-enhanced lethal means safety concepts to extended reality interventions, offering the potential for healing and recovery to Veterans.

Virtual accelerator program finalists advance and refine solutions

Leading up to Demo Day, finalists participated in a virtual accelerator program designed to help them develop ambitious but achievable roadmaps for prototyping, iteration, testing and evaluation.

The accelerator helped finalists strengthen their solutions to better reach and serve Veterans through:

- Webinars, panels and Q&A sessions;
- Mentorship;
- Technology partner support;
- Exclusive data sets;
- Networking opportunities;
- Pitch prep.

Mission Daybreak to award \$11.5 million

Phase 2 will award \$11.5 million in prizes: Two first-place winners will each receive \$3 million, three second-place winners will each receive \$1 million, and five third-place winners will each receive \$500,000.

Following the challenge, VA may engage with select solutions through contracts, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements or other partnership vehicles.

To learn more, visit missiondaybreak.net and subscribe to the challenge newsletter.

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BUSHWHACKER 22-07: DEPLOY

By Airman 1st Class
PAIGE WELDON

355th Wing Public Affairs

Over 300 Airmen from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base participated in an Agile Combat Employment training exercise, Bushwhacker 22-07.

This operational training was a part of the Lead Wing certification process and allowed DM to prepare for the final certification exercise, which is projected to take place in 2023.

The Lead Wing concept allows a base to forward deploy multiple units at a moment's notice to achieve the establishment of a cohesive and successful call to duty by delivering combat power anywhere in the world.

For this iteration of Bushwhacker, Airmen were spread across multiple locations in Virginia, including Joint Base Langley-Eustis and Naval Air Station Oceana.

"One of the benefits of having the exercise in Virginia instead of Davis-Monthan is that we can separate ourselves from our home station," said U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Eric Cline, 355th Wing Inspector General's office wing exercise manager. "The logistical challenges that came with moving across the country created a learning opportunity for everyone involved."

Throughout the exercise, Airmen faced a variety of training scenarios in order to access and reinforce their multi-capable Airmen skills and ability to adapt to different environments.

"We are on the edge of innovation," said Cline. "At the beginning of the exercise, Col. Scott Mills (355th Wing Commander) said, 'break glass' meaning, to push the boundaries and not be afraid to make mistakes. I believe that's exactly what we've done. This is one of the most dynamic exercises that we've done to date, and that really helps us figure out what capabilities we can improve on."

Airmen remained agile and ready during all potential simulated threats and complications, despite 24-hour operations.

In addition to the Airmen participating, a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook, its aircrew and U.S. Navy firefighters aided in the success of BW 22-07. The Army aircrew transported Airmen and equipment to the various locations throughout the area while the Navy firefighters offered support by being present and ready at all A-10 Thunderbolt II

launches and recoveries. The U.S. Army's 7th Transportation Brigade operated vessels and local Civil Air Patrol brought airborne intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities to support the exercise as part of the oppositional forces.

Running alongside with Bushwhacker 22-07 was Air Combat Command's Agile Battle Laboratory's Force Protection Operations Rehearsal. While Airmen from the wing focused on execution as a Lead Wing, the ABL worked to validate and exercise groundbreaking technology, tactics and unit organization to continue accelerating ACE operations.

The lab teamed with the Naval Research Laboratory and private industry partners to introduce new tools and techniques to defeat simulated adversary long-range ISR and reduce the threat of cruise and ballistic missiles. The lab also introduced Air Defense Artillery Coordination Officers to the wing's command and control team, who provided joint coordination for simulated Patriot and missile defense in support of ACE maneuvers against a realistic long-range threat.

"These sorts of advancements in what we provide the force will be crucial to meeting the needs of ACE to support the National Defense Strategy," said U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Dustin Bennett, Agile Battle Lab commander. "We're thrilled with the feedback we received on our projects from the 355th, and look forward to working alongside them again in the future."

Through continuous training, joint operations and preparation, DM's ability to relocate bases to new locations with minimal notice helps share the Air Force's future employment strategies.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

U.S. Air Force Capt. Dylan Smith, 354th Fighter Squadron A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot, plans flight operations during a simulated evacuation during exercise Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, Nov. 6. Throughout the exercise, Airmen faced a variety of training scenarios to access and reinforce and reinforce multi-capable Airmen skills and ability to adapt to different environments.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot assigned to the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base searches for his bags during Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, Nov. 1, 2022. Over 300 Airmen participated in BW 22-07, an Agile Combat Employment training exercise. This operational training was a part of the Lead Wing certification process and allowed DM to prepare for the final certification exercise, which is projected to take place in 2023.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

LEFT: A U.S. Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II pilot assigned to the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base disembarks an A-10 Thunderbolt II during Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, Nov. 3. Over 300 Airmen participated in BW 22-07, an Agile Combat Employment training exercise.

BELOW: A-10 Thunderbolt IIs assigned to the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base taxi out during Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress, Virginia, Nov. 5.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon



A U.S. Army Soldier stands on the rear deck of a large military aircraft, making multiple trips a day delivering Airmen assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

Y, SUSTAIN, EMPLOY, RECOVER



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

ck of a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook as it flies over Virginia Beach, Virginia, while transport-
vis-Monthan Air Force Base during Bushwhacker 22-07 Nov. 5. The Chinook and its aircrew
en and equipment to the various locations of BW 22-07.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

An A-10 Thunderbolt II assigned to the 354th Fighter Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base lands at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress, Virginia, during Bushwhacker 22-07 Nov. 3, 2022. For this iteration of Bushwhacker, Airmen were spread across multiple locations in Virginia and displayed DM's ability to accomplish the Lead Wing concept.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Kristine Legate

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to various squadrons at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, perform communications between the main operating base and the simulated forward contingency location during exercise Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, Nov. 3, 2022. Airmen from DM went on a temporary duty assignment to Virginia to employ the Lead Wing concept.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Sean Watts, 355th Logistics Readiness Squadron Fuels Quality Assurance section chief and a member of the 355th Wing Inspection Team, examines Airmen's work performance during Bushwhacker 22-07 at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress, Virginia, Nov. 4. The Wing Inspection Team was present at all locations during BW 22-07, ensuring Airmen followed procedures and abided by all Air Force instructions.



U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Paige Weldon

U.S. Air Force Airmen assigned to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base walk towards a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook at Naval Auxiliary Landing Field Fentress, Virginia, before transport to Naval Air Station Oceana during Bushwhacker 22-07, Nov. 4, 2022. The Chinook and its aircrew made multiple trips a day delivering Airmen and equipment to the various locations of BW 22-07.

Military associations join forces for Thanksgiving cheer

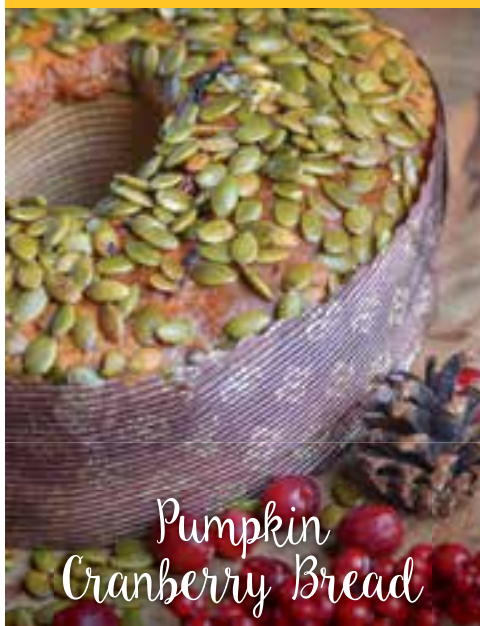


U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Vaughn Weber

U.S. Air Force Airmen distribute Thanksgiving turkeys during a turkey drive at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona, on Nov. 21. This turkey drive was a joint effort of the Military Assistance Program, Air Force Sergeants Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

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AF provides guidance for aircrew who want to fly pregnant

Secretary of the Air Force

Public Affairs

The Department of the Air Force has developed several products designed to assist aircrew in making the most informed decisions about whether to fly during their pregnancy.

In April 2022, the DAF issued a clarification of policies pertaining to aircrew during pregnancy. Since then, the Department recognized the need to provide aircrew, commanders, and healthcare professionals greater awareness of and transparency around the process for submission and review of waivers to fly during pregnancy.

The Aircrew Voluntary Acceptance of Risk, or AVAR, is a three-part document (including a risk acknowledgment page, an outline of medical risks, and acceptable flight profiles) designed to ensure aircrew have access to the information that will allow them to make the most informed decisions about whether to continue flying during their pregnancy.

Additionally, a set of frequently asked questions and answers were developed for additional assistance. Both the AVAR and FAQs may be found on the Air Force Medical Service's Reproductive Health webpage.

"At the end of the day, we need to balance operational readiness, safety, and our aircrew's agency, and I'm proud of the

progress we've made to that end," said Under Secretary of the Air Force Gina Ortiz Jones.

Aircrew wanting to be considered for crewed flight duty must personally request to continue flying during their pregnancy. The AVAR will help guide discussions with healthcare providers and inform members of both known and potential, but unmeasured, risks to make an informed decision.

To return to flying duties after becoming pregnant, the service member must submit a waiver for review by their flight surgeon, obstetrical care provider, and commander, who must collaborate to determine whether to approve the waiver. All flights must meet approved flight profiles based on the commander's discretion and safety considerations.

DAF leadership's intent is that aircrew are confident that the decision of whether to request to fly during pregnancy – or not – will have no impact on their military career. Aircrew who elect not to fly have other options to continue their career progression, such as maintaining currencies in the simulator, instructing academics, supervisor of flying, top-3, and many other training opportunities and duties.

"It was a team effort to develop these options for pregnant aircrew so they can continue carrying out the missions they are trained and ready to perform," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr.



U.S. Air Force photo by Michelle Gigante
U.S. Air Force Maj. Molly Sexton conducts pre-flight inspections Oct. 25, 2022, at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The Aircrew Voluntary Acceptance of Risk document provides female aircrew with the information needed to make decisions based on their career experience, family needs, advice of their medical providers and commander's input.

As with any medical condition, the DAF will continue to review aircrew pregnancy policy and practices, including an ongoing collection of health and safety data. The service remains focused on identifying, analyzing, and appropriately mitigating flight safety hazards and exposures to facilitate the safe and successful accomplishment of the military mission. A continual review will also drive appropriate modifications to the AVAR to allow aircrew to make the most informed decision on whether to request the continuation of flight duties.

Get your vaccines before holidays

By
JAY SHIFFLER

VA Center for Health Promotion, Disease Prevention

The holiday season is upon us, and one way to protect your loved ones as we gather together is to get your flu shot. When you get your flu shot, you reduce your risk of getting sick with flu. You will also help to reduce the spread of flu so that you and your loved ones can enjoy a healthier holiday season together.

With holiday gatherings approaching, you can also do your part to best protect yourself and others from COVID-19. When you stay up to date with an updated bivalent COVID-19 booster dose, you will be protected against both the original virus that causes COVID-19 and its Omicron variants.

You can safely receive both the COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine during the same visit to your provider.

Both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine are essential to protecting yourself during this holiday season. They not only increase your chances of staying healthy, but also have been shown to reduce the risk of hospitalization and death from illness.

In addition, these vaccines will help you provide a safe environment for your loved ones who are more at risk, such as pregnant women, older adults and those with chronic diseases.

With the flu and COVID-19 vaccines, you can protect yourself, those you love, and those around you during this holiday season.

Learn more at prevention.va.gov/flu/FluShots.



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