

COVID-19 or Flu? How to Tell

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Overview

COVID-19 and the flu have similar symptoms. The two can be hard to tell apart. The only way to know for sure which illness you have is to be tested. If you have questions about COVID-19 testing, ask your doctor or go to [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) to use the COVID-19 Viral Testing Tool.

Since the symptoms are so alike, it makes sense to act as if you have COVID-19 until your test results come back. This means staying home and limiting contact with people in your home. You'll need to wash your hands often and disinfect surfaces that you touch. And be sure to wear a mask when you're around other people. This is also good advice if you think you have the flu.

COVID-19 and the flu have these symptoms in common:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle and body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

COVID-19 has another symptom that also may occur:

- New loss of taste or smell

COVID-19 symptoms may appear from 2 to 14 days after infection.

Flu symptoms usually appear 1 to 4 days after infection.

The importance getting of a flu shot during COVID

It's important to get your yearly flu vaccine and stay up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines. The flu and COVID-19 can be active at the same time. You can get sick with both infections at once. And having both may make you more sick than getting just one.

Getting both vaccines can prevent you and others from getting very sick. If you do get the flu or COVID-19 after being vaccinated, you're much less likely to get seriously ill.

Credits

Author: Healthwise Staff
Medical Review:
Heather Quinn MD - Family Medicine
Lesley Ryan MD - Family Medicine

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