

Comparing Flu vs. COVID-19

Influenza (the flu) and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses that can affect your lungs and spread easily. The two illnesses are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, while influenza is caused by influenza A and B viruses.¹

Signs and symptoms

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), both the flu and COVID-19 may include these symptoms:

- Cough
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Fever or feeling feverish/having chills
- Headache
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Different symptoms with COVID-19

Influenza and COVID-19 share many of the same symptoms. COVID-19 can sometimes cause a person to lose their sense of smell or taste. This rarely occurs with flu, but it can occur with certain strains of the virus. It also may take longer to develop symptoms when you have COVID-19. With flu, symptoms typically develop within 4 days of infection. With COVID-19, symptoms may appear as early as 2 days and as late as 8 days after infection.

Help protect yourself from flu and COVID-19

Though you can contract the flu all year round, it is most common in the fall and winter. And with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it may be more important than ever to protect against both viruses.



Where can I go for more information?

Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) to learn more about comparisons between the flu and COVID-19 vaccine.

¹ Similarities and Differences between Flu and COVID-19. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm> Accessed August 16, 2022. All Optum trademarks and logos are owned by Optum, Inc. in the U.S. and other jurisdictions. All other brand or product names are trademarks or registered marks of their respective owners.