

# Is it Flu or COVID-19?

Both illnesses can cause mild to severe symptoms and serious complications. But there are differences, too.



## FLU (Influenza)

**Flu is a common, contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It's different from a cold.**

### Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms usually develop within two days of exposure, come on suddenly and may include:

- Fever or feeling feverish
- Cough
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

### How it Spreads

Flu spreads by respiratory droplets made when infected people cough, sneeze or talk. It can also spread on surfaces, but it's less common. And you can spread flu before, during and after you're sick

### Who's at Risk?

Anyone can get the flu. Some people — like young children, older adults and people with some health conditions — are at higher risk of serious complications.



## COVID-19

**Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2.**

### Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms can develop two to 14 days after exposure and may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea

### How it Spreads

Respiratory droplets also spread COVID-19. Close contact with others (less than 6 feet) helps it spread faster. Touching items used by an infected person, like tissues or linen, can spread COVID-19. And the virus can be spread by someone without symptoms.

### Who's at Risk?

Anyone can get COVID-19. Older adults and people with some health conditions are at higher risk of severe illness and serious complications.

The seasonal flu affects tens of thousands of Americans each year. This year, it's possible to get the flu at the same time as COVID-19. Protecting yourself and others is more important than ever. Please do your part by getting a flu shot and following other CDC guidelines.

For more information about flu and COVID-19, visit [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu) and [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov).



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