**Safety Topic**

Seasonal Influenza & COVID-19

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk of serious flu complications. The best way to prevent flu is by getting vaccinated each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there were 39,000,000-56,000,000 flu illnesses during the 2019-2020 flu season.

Take action to protect yourself. According to the CDC, getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021 to protect yourself, your family and your community from flu. A flu vaccine this season can also help reduce the burden on our healthcare systems responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and save medical resources for care of COVID-19 patients.

# Flu and COVID-19 FAQs

# What is the difference between influenza (flu) and COVID-19?

# Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the two.

# Will there be flu along with COVID-19 in the fall and winter?

# While it’s not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the fall and winter, CDC believes it’s likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading. In this context, getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever. CDC recommends that all people 6 months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

# Can I have flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

# Yes. It is possible have flu, as well as other respiratory illnesses, and COVID-19 at the same time. Health experts are still studying how common this can be.

# Some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, making it hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic testing can help determine if you are sick with flu or COVID-19.

# Is there a test that can detect both flu and COVID-19?

# Yes. CDC has developed a test that will check for A and B type seasonal flu viruses and SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This test will be used by U.S. public health laboratories.

# Signs and Symptoms

Similarities:

Both COVID-19 and flu can have varying degrees of signs and symptoms, ranging from no symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe symptoms. Common symptoms that COVID-19 and flu share include:

* Fever or feeling feverish/chills.
* Cough.
* Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
* Fatigue (tiredness).
* Sore throat.
* Runny or stuffy nose.
* Muscle pain or body aches.
* Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea.

**Differences:**

* Flu - Flu viruses can cause mild to severe illness, including common signs and symptoms listed above.
* COVID-19 - Other signs and symptoms of COVID-19, different from flu, may include change in or loss of taste or smell.

# Healthy Habits to Help Prevent Flu

* Avoid close contact.
* Stay home when you are sick.
* Cover your mouth and nose.
* Handwashing: Clean hands save lives.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
* Practice other good health habits.

# *Source:* [*https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/*](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/)

# Additional Resources

# CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019

# <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

# OSHA Covid-19 Webpage

# <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>

# OSHA Seasonal Flu Webpage

# <https://www.osha.gov/dts/guidance/flu/index.html>

# *Note: In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, local governments, businesses or public health departments may recommend additional precautions be taken in your community. Follow those instructions.*

[**www.powerlinesafety.org**](http://www.powerlinesafety.org/)