

## Do I have a cold, the flu or COVID-19?

A ticklish throat, a stuffy nose, a burning forehead: right now, almost any hint of oncoming illness feels alarming. With COVID-19 cases on the rise and flu season fast approaching, it's more important than ever to know the difference between COVID-19 symptoms and those of the garden-variety flu or head cold – and what to do depending on how you feel.

COVID-19 SYMPTOMS COMPARED				
Symptom	COVID-19	Influenza (flu)	Common Cold	Seasonal Allergies
	Symptoms range from moderate to severe; gradual onset	Symptoms usually moderate; quick onset	Symptoms change depending on environment	Symptoms change depending on environment
Fever	Common	Common	Rare	Rare
Fatigue	Common	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Cough	Common (usually dry)	Common (usually dry)	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Rare	Rare	Common	Common
Headache	Sometimes	Common	Rare	Sometimes
Body aches & pains	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Not present
Runny or stuffed nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
Diarrhea	Rare	Sometimes	Rare	Not present
Nausea or vomiting	Rare	Sometimes	Rare	Not present
Shortness of breath	Common	Rare	Rare	Sometimes
Loss of taste and smell	Sometimes	Rare	Rare	Rare
Itchy, watery eyes	Not present	Not present	Sometimes	Common

### How colds and flu are different than COVID-19

Both the flu and COVID-19 are respiratory ailments brought on by viruses. COVID-19 is caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, while the flu, or seasonal influenza, results from infection by any number of influenza viruses.

Flu symptoms typically come on quickly, unlike those of COVID-19, and last for five to seven days. Colds are caused by a variety of viruses and also tend to come on quickly, lasting for a week to 10 days. The common cold tends to be milder than the flu, bringing a stuffed-up nose and sneezing – usually without fever or headaches.

Over-the-counter medications can help manage cold and flu symptoms, but as most doctors will tell you, the best treatments are rest, hydration and nutrition – to help your immune system do its job. Given time, a healthy body will clear most cold and flu viruses without medical intervention.