

COVID-19 vs. Flu

Some say COVID-19 is like the flu. But we say, not so fast!
Here's a breakdown of the similarities and differences.

| | COVID-19 | FLU |
|---|---|---|
| Symptoms | | |
| Severity | No symptoms (asymptomatic) to severe | Mild to severe |
| Time to appear | 2–14 days | 1–4 days |
| Unique symptoms | Dry cough, shortness of breath, change in or loss of taste or smell | Many flu symptoms are also symptoms of COVID-19 |
| Risk | | |
| Average Risk | Everyone | Everyone is at risk, but vaccination decreases that risk |
| High Risk | Obesity, lung disease, cardiovascular disease, poorly controlled diabetes, pregnancy, immunosuppression, over 65 years old, chronic renal disease | Older adults, people with other health conditions, pregnant people and children under 5 |
| Transmission | | |
| Through respiratory droplets | Yes | Yes |
| By touching surfaces first, then eyes, nose, or mouth | Yes | Yes |
| Prevention | | |
| Vaccines | No, but clinical trials are underway | Yes, a new one each year |
| Testing | | |
| Can be confirmed by a test | Yes | Yes |
| Treatment | | |
| Prescriptions | Outside of research trials, treatment is currently reserved for hospitalized patients | Antiviral medications shorten the duration and ease symptoms |
| Over-the-counter medications | | For symptom management |
| Mortality | | |
| As of August 11, 2020 | 3.2%* | 0.1% |

The actions we take to prevent the flu work against COVID-19 as well. These include frequent hand-washing, social distancing, disinfecting surfaces, and covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve.