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COVID-19, INFLUENZA, AND RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS: HOW ARE THESE RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES DIFFERENT?



Your child has a stuffy nose, cough and fever. Is it a cold? Is it the flu? Or are they symptoms of COVID-19? Some COVID-19, flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and cold symptoms can be alike. But there are some clues that set each of these common viruses apart.

An early wave of seasonal infections in kids this fall is being called a “triple-demic.” The spike in RSV, COVID, flu and other infections in children has contributed to overcrowded emergency departments and more kids needing hospital stays than usual this time of year.

Is it COVID, the flu, RSV or a common cold?

Let’s look at the viruses that cause four common childhood illnesses—COVID, flu, the common cold and RSV. All of them share some similar symptoms. This can make it hard to tell them

apart. Here are some clues that help your pediatrician figure out what kind of respiratory illness is making your child sick.

COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, congestion, shortness of breath, sore throat, headache, sneezing, vomiting/diarrhea, or loss of taste/smell. COVID-19 symptoms can appear two to 14 days after infection.

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, stuffy nose, shortness of breath, sore throat, and headache. Symptoms show up about one to four days after being exposed to a person who is infected with the flu. Sometimes, the infection can cause pneumonia.

RSV can cause a fever, cough, fatigue, stuffy nose, shortness of breath, sneezing, fast/short breaths, flaring nostrils, wheezing and grunting, poor feeding/no appetite, and head bobbing or chest caving in between and under ribs with each breath. Symptoms of RSV usually are worse on days three through five and can last up to seven days. This infection causes a cold, which may be followed by bronchiolitis or pneumonia. RSV is common in late fall through early spring. In 2021, however, the pandemic caused a strange thing to happen. The number of RSV infections and hospital rates went up in summer 2021 instead. Nearly all children get RSV by their second birthday.

Common cold symptoms may include fever, cough, fatigue, stuffy nose, sore throat, and sneezing. Colds are upper respiratory infections that can be caused by many viruses. A few common cold viruses are rhinovirus, adenovirus, human coronavirus, human parainfluenza virus, human metapneumovirus, and RSV. Healthy children can get about six colds a year.

Can kids get more than one illness at the same time?

Yes. Your doctor may refer to this as a secondary illness. For example, it is not unusual for children with flu or COVID-19 to develop moderate or severe pneumonia.

And sometimes, colds can lead to another health problem like an ear infection or sinus infection.

Because some of the symptoms of flu, COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses are similar, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends testing to confirm a diagnosis. People can be infected with both flu and COVID-19 at the same time and have symptoms of both.

How to avoid getting sick now that viruses are so unpredictable.

Vaccines are an effective tool to prevent serious illness from the flu, COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable diseases. Staying up to date on routine immunizations also helps others. The protection from vaccines can help to keep people at risk of serious problems from flu (and its complications, like inflammation of the heart, brain or muscle tissue and respiratory or kidney failure), COVID-19 (and its complications, like Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children, MIS-C and Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Adults, MIS-A), and other viruses out of the hospital.

Everyone 6 months and older should get flu vaccines each year. Get your child vaccinated by the end of October to protect them throughout flu season, which can last until the end of May. Everyone 6 months and older also should receive COVID vaccinations.

According to the CDC, RSV, is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild, cold-like symptoms. Most people recover in a week or two, but RSV can be serious. Infants and older adults are more likely to develop severe RSV and need hospitalization.

Vaccines are available to protect older adults from severe RSV. Monoclonal antibody products are available to protect infants and young children from severe RSV.

In addition to vaccines, there are other tools to help stop viruses from spreading. Children should learn to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they cough or sneeze (and then put the tissue in the trash right away and wash their hands afterwards). Wearing a mask in public can help prevent COVID, flu and other viruses from spreading. And everyone should be encouraged to wash their hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Remember if your child is sick and you have any questions or concerns about their symptoms, don't hesitate to call your pediatrician. And it is important for all children to stay up to date on immunizations, sports physical examinations and routine care.

Source: <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/COVID-19/Pages/How-is-the-Flu-Different-From-COVID-19.aspx>

[Flu Symptoms & Complications | CDC](#)

[RSV \(Respiratory Syncytial Virus\) | CDC](#)

Prostate Cancer Info Center

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a time to help people learn about prostate cancer and support those who are affected. Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer among men. In 2023, the American Cancer Society estimates there will be about 288,300 new cases and about 34,700 deaths from prostate cancer.

The American Urological Association suggests men ages 55 to 69, with an average risk for prostate cancer, talk to their doctor about whether prostate cancer testing is right for them. For men with a higher risk of getting prostate cancer, which includes African-American men or men with a family history of cancer, think about talking to your doctor as early as 40-54 years of age.

The Urology Care Foundation is here to help you learn more about whether you are at risk for prostate cancer and when to talk to your doctor about whether screening is right for you. Click the link below to find free resources on the types of prostate cancer, treatment options, life after prostate cancer and more.

Source: <https://www.urologyhealth.org/media-center/prostate-cancer-info-center>



September National Food Safety Education Month!

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, every year, an estimated 1 in 6 people in the United States (or 48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from eating contaminated food. Anyone can get sick from a foodborne illness (also called food poisoning). Learn how to take steps to help prevent food poisoning and show others how to keep food safe.

The Core Four Practices

About the Core Four Practices

Right now, there may be an invisible enemy ready to strike. He's called BAC (bacteria) and he can make people sick. In fact, even though consumers can't see BAC – or smell him, or feel him – he and millions more like him may already be invading food products, kitchen surfaces, knives and other utensils. But you have the power to Fight BAC!® and to reduce your risk of foodborne illness. It's as easy as following these core four Fight BAC!® practices for food safety:

Clean

Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, counter tops and food.

To Fight BAC!® always use food safety practices:

- Wash hands and surfaces often
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.

Separate

Don't cross-contaminate

Cross-contamination is how bacteria can be spread. Improper handling of raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can create an inviting environment for cross-contamination. As a result, harmful bacteria can spread to food and throughout the kitchen leading to a foodborne illness. Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.

Cook

Cook to the safe internal temperature

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods.

The best way to Fight BAC!® is to: Use a food thermometer which measures the internal temperature of cooked meat, poultry and egg dishes, to make sure that the food is cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Chill

Refrigerate promptly

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs and other perishables as soon as you get them home from the store.

Never let raw meat, poultry, eggs, cooked food or cut fresh fruits or vegetables sit at room temperature more than two hours before putting them in the refrigerator or freezer (one hour when the temperature is above 90 °F).

Never thaw food at room temperature. Food must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. There are three safe ways to thaw food: (1) in the refrigerator, (2) in cold water, and (3) in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

Always marinate food in the refrigerator.

Source: <https://www.fightbac.org/food-safety-basics/the-core-four-practices/>



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