

Road to **WELLfluent**TM

Embrace better health.

Flu Season and COVID-19

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.

While more is learned every day, there is still a lot that is unknown about COVID-19 and the virus that causes it. [This table](#) compares COVID-19 and flu, given the best available information to date.

To learn more about COVID-19, visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

To learn more about flu, visit [Influenza \(Flu\)](#).

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 COVID-19 more dangerous than flu?

Flu and COVID-19 can both result in serious illness, including illness resulting in hospitalization or death. While there is still



much to learn about COVID-19, at this time, it does seem as if COVID-19 is more deadly than seasonal influenza; however, it is too early to draw any conclusions from the current data. This may change as we learn more about the number of people who are infected who have mild illnesses.

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Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19, however flu vaccination has many other important [benefits](#). Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death. **Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources.**

Why is it important for influenza (flu) vaccines to be given during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders, have led to decreased use of routine preventive medical services, including [immunization services](#). Ensuring that people continue or start getting routine vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting people and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks, including flu. Routine vaccination prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits and hospitalizations, which further strain the healthcare system.

For the upcoming flu season, flu vaccination will be very important to reduce flu because it can help reduce the overall impact of respiratory illnesses on the population and thus lessen the resulting burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A flu vaccine may also provide [several individual health benefits](#), including keeping you from getting sick with flu, reducing the severity of your illness if you do get flu and reducing your risk of a flu-associated hospitalization.

What is CDC doing to promote flu vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To address the importance of influenza vaccination, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, CDC will maximize flu vaccination by increasing availability of vaccine, including purchasing an additional 2 million doses of pediatric flu vaccine and 9.3 million doses of adult flu vaccine, by emphasizing the importance of flu vaccination for the entire flu season, and by conducting targeted communication outreach to specific groups who are at higher risk for complications from flu. These same groups are often at higher risk for COVID-19 too, so protecting them from influenza is important to decrease their risk of co-infection. Communication strategies for providers and the public will include:

- Educational outreach activities by CDC, including social media, press conferences, web page spotlights, radio media tours, op-eds, and other publications,
- A digital campaign to educate the general public and people with who are at increased risk from influenza and COVID-19 complications,
- Special educational efforts to inform the general population, people with underlying health conditions, and African American and Hispanic audiences about the importance of flu vaccination, and

- Updated vaccination websites for the public and providers that highlight the safety precautions being implemented in healthcare facilities during the pandemic.

Should a flu vaccine be given to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

- No. Vaccination should be deferred (postponed) for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of whether they have symptoms, until they have met the [criteria](#) to discontinue their isolation. While mild illness is not a contraindication to flu vaccination, vaccination visits for these people should be postponed to avoid exposing healthcare personnel and other patients to the virus that causes COVID-19. When scheduling or confirming appointments for vaccination, patients should be instructed to notify the provider's office or clinic in advance if they currently have or develop any symptoms of COVID-19.
- Additionally, a prior infection with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or flu does not protect someone from future flu infections. The best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year.

Will new flu viruses circulate this season?

Flu viruses are constantly changing so it's not unusual for new flu viruses to appear each year. More information about [how flu viruses change](#) is available.

When will flu activity begin and when will it peak?

The timing of flu is difficult to predict and can vary in different parts of the country and from season to season.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm>



September is Suicide Prevention Month

TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAINTY

Human beings like certainty. We are hard-wired to want to know what is happening when and to notice things that feel threatening to us. When things feel uncertain or when we don't generally feel safe, it's normal to feel stressed. This very reaction, while there to protect us, can cause all sorts of havoc when there is a sense of uncertainty and conflicting information around us.

A large part of anxiety comes from a sense of what we think we should be able to control, but can't. Right now, many of us are worried about COVID-19, known as the "Coronavirus". We may feel helpless about what will happen or what we can do to prevent further stress. The uncertainty might also connect to our uncertainty about other aspects of our lives, or remind us of past times when we didn't feel safe and the immediate future was uncertain.

In times like these, your's mental health can suffer. You might not always know it's happening. You might feel more on edge than usual, angry, helpless or sad. You might notice that you are more frustrated with others or want to completely avoid any reminders of what is happening. For people who already struggle with mental wellness, feelings of depression or being less motivated to carry out daily activities can result.

It's important to note that we are not helpless in light of current news events. We can always choose our response. If you are struggling, here are some things you can do to take care of your mental health in the face of uncertainty:

1. **Separate what is in your control from what is not.**

There are things you can do, and it's helpful to focus on those. Wash your hands. Remind others to wash theirs. Take your vitamins. Limit your consumption of news (Do you really need to know what is happening on a cruise ship you aren't on?).

2. Do what helps you feel a sense of safety. This will be different for everyone, and it's important not to compare yourself to others. It's ok if you've decided what makes you feel safe is to limit attendance of large social events, but make sure you separate when you are isolating based on potential for sickness versus isolating because it's part of depression.

3. Get outside in nature--even if you are avoiding crowds. I took a walk yesterday afternoon in my neighborhood with my daughter. The sun was shining, we got our dose of vitamin D, and it felt good to both get



some fresh air and quality time together. Exercise also helps both your physical and mental health.

4. Challenge yourself to stay in the present. Perhaps your worry is compounding—you are not only thinking about what is currently happening, but also projecting into the future. When you find yourself worrying about something that hasn't happened, gently bring yourself back to the present moment. Notice the sights, sounds, tastes and other sensory experiences in your immediate moment and name them. Engaging in mindfulness activities is one way to help stay grounded when things feel beyond your control.

5. Stay connected and reach out if you need more support. Talk to trusted friends about what you are feeling. If you are feeling particularly anxious or if you are struggling with your mental health, it's ok to reach out to a mental health professional for support. You don't have to be alone with your worry and it can be comforting to share what you are experiencing with those trained to help.

We are in this together, and help is always available. If you're feeling alone and struggling, you can also reach out to The Crisis Text Line by texting TALK to 741741 or National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK.

WORLD HEART DAY IS SEPTEMBER 29

USE  TO BEAT 

Use Heart ... for society, your loved ones and you

We are living in unprecedented times. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the healthcare profession, national healthcare systems and our individual responsibilities – for our own health and for the vulnerable in society.

We don't know what course the pandemic will take in the future but we do know that taking care of our hearts right now is more important than ever.

So this year on 29 September, our campaign is asking the world to:

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is the number one cause of death on the planet. It has many causes: from smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, to air pollution, and rare and neglected conditions such as Chagas Disease and cardiac amyloidosis.

In the time of COVID-19, CVD patients are faced with a double-edged threat. Not only are they more at risk of developing severe forms of the virus, but they may also be afraid to seek ongoing care for their hearts.

Use Heart is about using ...

Your head

To understand what it takes to live a heart healthy life and to act on that knowledge, changing your behavior for a better quality of life now and in the future.

Your influence

As an individual to set an example for your loved ones.

As a healthcare professional to help your patients make positive changes for their heart health.



As an employer to invest in the heart health of your employees.

As a government to implement policies and initiatives that will lead to better societal heart health, such as sugar taxes, smoking bans and reducing air pollution.

Your compassion

To look beyond the self and act in ways that support the most vulnerable in society; those with underlying heart-related conditions that may put them at greater risk in the time of COVID-19.

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