



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM WINTER ILLNESS

THE FLU AND COVID-19

The winter months bring an increased risk of respiratory illnesses — especially influenza (the flu) and COVID-19. Both viruses spread easily from person to person through coughs, sneezes, and even talking, and both can cause serious illness. Fortunately, there are ways to protect yourself and those around you. Understanding these two illnesses, recognizing their symptoms early, and staying up to date with your vaccinations are key steps to staying healthy this winter.

SHARED SYMPTOMS: And How They Differ

Both illnesses can cause fever, chills, fatigue, body aches, headaches, sore throat, cough, and nasal congestion. However, there are a few key differences to look for:

- **Loss of taste or smell:** Much more common with COVID-19.
- **Difficulty breathing:** More frequent and severe with COVID-19.
- **Onset of symptoms:** Flu symptoms typically come on suddenly. COVID-19 symptoms often develop more gradually.
- **Duration:** Flu symptoms usually improve in a week. COVID-19 can cause a longer illness.
- **Spread:** COVID-19 is generally more contagious than the flu.

VACCINATION: The Most Effective Protection

The most important step you can take to guard against both flu and COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Each year's flu vaccine is updated to protect against the most common strains circulating that season, and the COVID-19 vaccines continue to be refined to target current variants. Vaccination significantly reduces your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and long-term complications.

STAY HEALTHY THIS WINTER.



**FLU VACCINES
ARE TYPICALLY
40% TO 60%
EFFECTIVE**

PREVENTION: Your Best Defense

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Keep high-touch surfaces — like doorknobs, phones, and keyboards — clean and disinfected.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.

GETTING VACCINATED

Health experts recommend that everyone six months and older get a flu shot every year and stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccinations and boosters. Vaccines are widely available at doctors' offices, pharmacies, and local health departments — often at no cost.

**PROTECT YOURSELF
AND YOUR FAMILY.**