COVID-19, Influenza, Cold

Respiratory illnesses like SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (COVID-19), influenza (flu) and the common cold, are spread by:

- droplets released into the air by coughing or sneezing
- having unclean hands and touching your face, mouth, eyes or nose.

What To Do if You Think You Have COVID-19

COVID-19 symptoms can include fever, cough and shortness of breath. They can be similar to other illnesses such as influenza or a cold. (See the chart on the other side.)

Many people with COVID-19 have mild or few symptoms, and some may have no symptoms at all. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you should get tested.

Call or message your health care provider if you think you have COVID-19.

Stop the Spread of Germs That Make You and Others Sick

- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Throw away tissues right away.
  - Put the used tissue in the waste basket.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

- Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer often during the day. When using soap and water, scrub for at least 20 seconds. When using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, make sure it contains at least 60% alcohol.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Stay home if you do not feel well.

- Follow guidelines for wearing masks, self-isolation and physical distancing while you are sick.

**Washing your hands** is the easiest way to reduce the risk of spreading germs that cause infections.

- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Wash your hands after using the bathroom, blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or before eating.

(over)
## Symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>COVID-19</th>
<th>Influenza</th>
<th>Cold</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cough</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fever</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>body aches</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shortness of breath</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>headache</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fatigue</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sore throat</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of taste or smell</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diarrhea</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chest pain or pressure</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>runny nose</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sneezing</td>
<td>rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Department of Health; health.mn.gov.

### When To Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you or your child has any of the following:

- trouble breathing
- shortness of breath
- lips that turn blue or purple
- seizures
- pain or pressure in your chest or abdomen (belly)
- vomiting (throwing up) that is severe or won’t stop
- influenza-like symptoms that get better but come back with a fever and bad cough
- severe dehydration (not urinating or having no tears when crying).

### Symptoms Specific to Children

Call your health care provider if your child has any of the following:

- fast breathing
- bluish skin color
- not drinking enough liquids
- not waking up or interacting with anyone
- being so irritable that he or she does not want to be held
- fever with a rash.

[allinahealth.org](http://allinahealth.org)