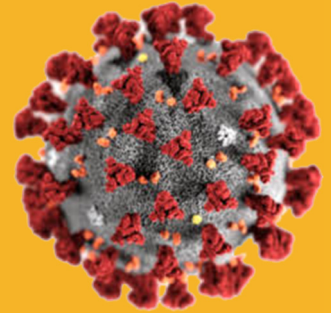




# TEAMSTERS

## SAFETY & HEALTH

### COVID-19 Guidance



## Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

October 26, 2021

### What Is Influenza (Flu)? <sup>1</sup>

Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that is caused by a virus (influenza). Contact with the flu virus can cause mild to severe sickness, which could lead to death. This virus spreads in the body to infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs.

### What are the symptoms of the flu virus?

The time of onset for flu virus symptoms is about two days starting with the day a person is initially exposed but has a range of 1-4 days.

People that contract the flu often feel symptoms similar to COVID-19, such as:

- Fever or feverish chills (*CDC states that not everyone gets a fever with the flu*) <sup>2</sup>
- Cough
- Sore Throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

### Does my health care provider test me for the flu if I have flu-like symptoms? <sup>3</sup>

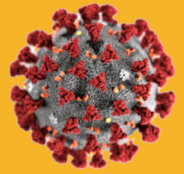
Health care providers may test you for the flu, but not every person with flu-like symptoms will be tested. After your provider has evaluated you, they may choose to diagnose you with the flu without the need for testing based on your symptoms and their clinical judgment.

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<sup>1</sup> [What is Influenza \(Flu\)?](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Key Facts About Influenza](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Diagnosing the Flu](#)



## **How long is the period of contagiousness after you have been infected with the flu virus?**

People that get infected by the flu are most contagious in the first 3-4 days. Some healthy adults may infect others one day before symptoms develop and 5-7 days after being sick.

## **How does the flu virus typically spread?**

Typically, the flu virus spreads when tiny droplets are released from infected people who cough, sneeze, or talk. The droplets may land in the mouth or nose of a person in close contact with the infected person. It is also possible for a person to get the flu by touching contaminated surfaces or an object with flu virus on the surface by touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

## **How does the flu virus typically spread?**

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## **When is flu season? <sup>4</sup>**

Seasonal flu viruses are most common to spread during the fall and winter months but are detected year-round in the United States. According to the CDC, the exact time and period for the Flu season can change each year, but most often, the flu season begins to increase in October. Typical activity peaks for the flu season are seen in the December and February months and could potentially last until May.

## **Do other respiratory viruses circulate during flu season? <sup>5</sup>**

Several other respiratory viruses circulate during flu season that causes symptoms similar to those seen with flu infection. The common types of respiratory viruses that circulate during flu season include:

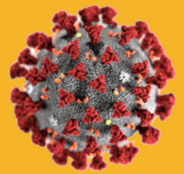
- Rhinovirus (one cause of the “common cold”)
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) = a virus that’s most common for causing severe respiratory illness in young children and the leading cause of death from respiratory illness in people aged 65 years and older.

The CDC has stated that it is very difficult to distinguish the flu virus from other viral or bacterial respiratory illnesses based on symptoms alone. Laboratory testing may be involved to properly diagnose the flu in infected people.

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<sup>4</sup> [Flu Season](#)

<sup>5</sup> [CDC's Flu Season Facts](#)



## Is there a population of people that are at high risk of contracting the flu virus?

It is important to note that anyone can become infected by the flu, and serious problems related to the flu can happen at any age. People are considered at high risk for developing serious flu complications if they are 65 years or older or at any age with a chronic medical condition such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease. Pregnant women are also considered in the serious flu complication category if they are exposed.

## Is it possible to be infected by the flu virus and a covid-19 virus at the same time?

The answer is **Yes**. It is possible to be infected with the flu virus and other respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 at the same time. Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but different viruses cause them. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus first identified in 2019, and flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses. The symptoms of the flu virus and COVID-19 are similar, making it hard to tell the difference between both viruses based on the symptoms alone. These facts support the need for everyone above the age of 6 to receive the seasonal flu vaccination and the COVID-19 vaccination as a preventive method.

### Flu

Typically, a person experiences symptoms anywhere from **1 to 4 days after infection**.

### Covid-19

Typically, a person experiences symptoms about **five days after being infected**, but symptoms can appear **2 to 14 days after infection**.

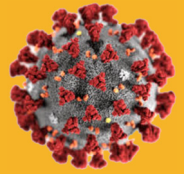
## What are the options to prevent the spread of the influenza virus?<sup>6</sup>

The CDC recommends receiving a yearly influenza vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Everyday preventive action is also recommended to reduce the spread of the flu, such as:

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- If you become sick, limit contact with others as much as possible
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash your hand often with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with viruses

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<sup>6</sup> [Preventing the spread of Influenza viruses](#)



There are influenza antiviral drugs that can be used to treat flu illness. Antiviral drugs are not a substitute for getting a vaccine and are used as a second line of defense to treat the seasonal flu virus. Antiviral drugs are not sold over the counter and will require a prescription from a health care provider. The best way to prevent infection from seasonal flu is to get vaccinated.

Updated news from CDC about the Influenza Season for 2021-2022<sup>7</sup>

All flu vaccines will be quadrivalent (containing four components), meaning the vaccine is designed to protect against four different flu viruses. **Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time.**

**For concerns, questions, and information, contact the IBT Safety and Health Department at (202) 624-6960 or visit: <https://teamster.org/COVID-19>**

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<sup>7</sup> [Frequently Asked Influenza \(Flu\) Questions: 2021-2021 Season](#)