



SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, INFLUENZA (FLU), AND THE COMMON COLD

COVID-19, influenza (flu), and the common cold are respiratory illnesses that are similarly contagious, but they are caused by different viruses. Because some of the symptoms of COVID-19, flu, and the common cold are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. COVID-19, flu, and colds share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the three of them. Current evidence shows that some people who are infected with COVID-19 may not have any symptoms. While more is learned every day, there is still a lot unknown about COVID-19 and the long-term and short-term impacts it has on the human body. This fact sheet compares symptoms of COVID-19, flu, and colds using the best available information as of October 2020.

	COVID-19	Flu	Cold
Symptom Onset	Varies, as asymptomatic	Sudden	Gradual
Fevers or Chills	Common	Common	Rare
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No
Fatigue or feeling tired	Common	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	No	No	Common
Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common
Muscle aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
Headache	Sometimes	Common	Rare
Diarrhea	Rare	Sometimes	No
Nausea or vomiting	Sometimes	Sometimes	No
Loss of taste or smell	Sometimes (sudden)	Rare	Sometimes

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, and Johns Hopkins Medicine