

It's Not Too Late to Get Your Flu Shot

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SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is encouraging everyone six months and older who has not yet received the seasonal flu vaccine to get it this week as part of National Influenza Vaccination Week.

“This year it is more important than ever to get your flu shot to help avoid being co-infected with flu and COVID-19,” said IDPH Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Not only could being infected with both a flu virus and the virus that causes COVID-19 result in severe health complications for individuals, it also places a tremendous burden on our health care system and health care workers who are being stretched due to the increase in COVID-19 cases. If you have not already received your flu shot, get it as soon as possible to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community.”

Vaccination is particularly important for people who are most vulnerable to developing serious flu complications, including people with certain chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes and heart disease. In fact, during the last flu season, 9 out of 10 adults hospitalized for flu had at least one reported underlying medical condition according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In addition to rolling up your sleeve, #SleeveUP, to get your flu vaccine, IDPH recommends following the 3 W's for both COVID-19 and influenza.

- Wash your hands
- Watch your distance
- Wear your mask

Viruses spread when infected people cough, sneeze, or talk. Flu usually comes on suddenly. Many of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are the same, such as fever and cough, but there are some differences. If you have symptoms of either flu or COVID-19, self-isolate and contact a health care provider. They can talk with you about testing and other measures you should be taking.

Below is a list of symptoms for flu and COVID-19.

SYMPTOMS	FLU	COVID-19
Symptom onset	2 days	2-14 days
Body Aches	Common	Common
Cough	Common	Common
Diarrhea	Sometimes	Sometimes
Fatigue/weakness	Common	Common
Fever/chills/shaking	Common	Common
Loss of taste or smell	Rare	Sometimes
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Common	Common
Stuffy nose	Common	Common
Sneezing	Sometimes	Rare
Sore throat	Common	Common
Headache	Common	Common

Influenza antiviral drugs can be a second line of defense for people who get sick with the flu. Many studies have found that in addition to lessening the duration and severity of symptoms, antiviral drugs can prevent flu complications.

To find a location to get a flu shot in your community, check with your health care provider or local health department. You can also use the online [Vaccine Finder](#). More information about [influenza](#) can be found on the IDPH website at www.dph.illinois.gov. More information about COVID-19 can be found at www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19, including where you can get [tested](#).