



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2020

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Illinois Department of Public Health Emphasizes Importance of Getting A Flu Shot Amid Ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic

Avoid co-infection with COVID-19 and flu

SPRINGFIELD – Every year the flu sickens millions of Americans, hospitalizes hundreds of thousands, and kills tens of thousands. This season, in addition to flu, we are battling COVID-19. We have already seen almost 7 million Americans confirmed with COVID-19, hundreds of thousands hospitalized, and more than 200,000 deaths.

“This season more than ever, it is critical that Illinoisans get our flu shots,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike. “Flu and COVID-19 each can cause serious respiratory illness and co-infection could possibly lead to more severe illnesses, hospitalization, and even death. While a vaccine for COVID-19 is still in development, a vaccine for flu already exists and is your best protection against flu. The choice is yours, but I urge you to not risk co-infection of two potentially deadly viruses. Please try and protect yourself and the people around you by getting the flu vaccine, which has been proven over the years to be safe and effective.”

Everyone six months of age and older should get the seasonal flu vaccine. The vaccine is available in either a flu shot, or in a nasal spray. Talk with a health care provider about what type is most appropriate for you. More information on the types of flu vaccine can be found on the [CDC website](#).

In addition to getting your flu vaccine, IDPH recommends following the 3 W’s for both COVID-19 and influenza.

- **W**ash your hands
- **W**atch your distance
- **W**ear your mask

Viruses spread when people who are infected 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.

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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](#).

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