

FAQ on COVID-19 & Influenza

With the flu season now upon us, there are many questions about influenza and COVID-19. This information is intended to help answer some of the more common questions.



Are COVID-19 and influenza caused by the same virus? If I get influenza, can it become COVID-19?

No, each condition is caused by a different virus, and so influenza does not change into COVID-19 (or vice versa). However, both conditions share many symptoms, which can make them difficult to tell apart. **If you suspect you may have either influenza or COVID-19, CAF urges you to contact your physician immediately.**

What are the symptoms for COVID-19 and influenza?

Both COVID-19 and influenza share the following symptoms. *(Please remember that not every person who comes down with influenza or COVID-19 will develop all these symptoms, and some people develop none of them.)*

- Fever/chills
- Cough
- Feeling tired
- Runny nose or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath/problems breathing
- Aches or pains in the body
- Headache
- Vomiting/diarrhea



In addition, in some cases people with COVID-19 develop a lessening or a loss of taste or smell, which is not a symptom associated with influenza.

When do symptoms usually appear?

For both COVID-19 and influenza, symptoms usually do not appear for at least 24 hours after exposure. (And again, in some cases, a person may not develop symptoms at all.) In general, most people develop influenza symptoms 1-4 days after exposure; with COVID-19, the symptoms more often appear about 5 days after infection. (However, sometimes COVID-19 symptoms do appear earlier and may also appear as late as 14 days after infection.)

How long is a person contagious with either COVID-19 or influenza?

Again, individual cases vary, but in general a person with influenza is most contagious for the first 3 or 4 days, but in some cases may continue being contagious for about a week. With COVID-19, a person may remain contagious for at least 10 days after symptoms appear.

Should a person with thalassemia get vaccinated for influenza and/or COVID-19?

Thalassemia experts recommend that individuals with thalassemia receive an annual influenza vaccination. At this writing, a vaccine for COVID-19 has not yet been developed and approved for use in the United States.

We also urge individuals with thalassemia (and all people) to observe practices shown to decrease the likelihood of exposure to COVID-19, including social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing hands frequently. These practices can also help decrease the risk of exposure to influenza.



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>

www.thalassemia.org
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