

What's the deal with winter sickness this year?

Viruses—and the symptoms they cause—spread more during the winter. Here's what you need to know to stay safe.

 Learn more about 3 common winter viruses and what you can do to protect yourself and your family.



What are the 3 most common viruses this winter?

These 3 common viruses infect your nose, throat, and lungs (your respiratory system):



Flu (influenza) – affects people of all ages, but can be more severe in children under age 2 and adults over 65



COVID-19 – can affect anyone and cause mild to severe symptoms



RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) – is most common in babies and children, but can cause serious lung infections in older adults or people with other health problems



Ways to protect yourself and your loved ones from getting sick



To protect yourself from flu, RSV, and COVID-19, make sure you get vaccinated if you're eligible.

Other ways to protect yourself include:

- Washing your hands often and trying not to touch your face
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces that you touch often, like doorknobs and light switches
- Wearing a mask in public places
- Getting tested if you feel sick (especially for flu or COVID-19). Getting tested right away is helpful so your doctor can start you on medicine if you need it.
- Staying home and avoiding large groups if you are feeling sick

Taking these steps will help you and your family stay healthy and out of the doctor's office or hospital!



Even if you've recently gotten sick with the flu or COVID-19, you should still get vaccinated! It will help protect you from getting sick again and help keep you from spreading the viruses. Find a vaccine at www.vaccines.gov



If I get sick, how will I know which virus I have?

It may be hard to tell the difference between these 3 viruses because they have some of the same signs and symptoms, such as headache, cough, and feeling tired. Your doctor may recommend getting tested to find out which virus you have, or they may tell you to just stay home and rest.



When should I be worried about my symptoms?

You should look out for emergency warning signs if you or your loved ones are sick. If you have any of the symptoms below, you should get help right away by going to the emergency room or calling 911.

Emergency warning signs

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Lips or face that look blue
- Ribs pulling in with each breath
- Chest pain
- Very bad muscle pain (child can't or refuses to walk)
- No pee for 8 hours, dry mouth, no tears when crying (dehydration)
- Not alert or interacting when awake
- Seizures
- Fever above 102 degrees that is not brought down with medicine
- Any fever in children younger than 3 months old
- Fever or cough that gets better but then comes back or gets worse
- Other health conditions getting worse

In adults

- Having a hard time breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or stomach that doesn't go away
- Feeling dizzy, confused, or not able to wake up
- Seizures
- Not peeing (urinating)
- Severe muscle pain
- Feeling very weak or being unsteady
- Fever or cough that gets better but comes back or gets worse
- Other health conditions getting worse

To learn more about staying healthy, visit these websites:



Preventing COVID-19

cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention



RSV symptoms and care

cdc.gov/rsv/about/symptoms.html



Preventing the flu

cdc.gov/flu/prevent



Find vaccines here

vaccines.gov