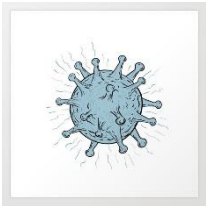


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Paragon Orthopedic Center
Grants Pass, Oregon



Covid-19 vs Seasonal Flu

Cold weather is coming and so is the flu. That sniffle this fall might bring more anxiety than usual. With the constant threat of Coronavirus infections rising, how will you know if what you have is the seasonal flu or Covid-19? And should you bother with a flu shot this year? These questions and more are looming large on everyone's mind because we all want to return to our usual routines. The CDC and the Wall Street Journal have addressed many concerns, explaining what is known and what is still unknown because of ongoing research into the novel coronavirus. Here's a summary of some differences and similarities:

- ☀ **Symptoms:** They are similar, but the key symptom that sets Covid-19 apart is the change or loss in taste or smell. Covid symptoms also come on suddenly and stronger; the fevers are not subtle.
- ☀ **If you are monitoring your symptoms, you can tell some differences between Covid and the seasonal flu.** Covid symptoms generally get worse with time and the telltale symptoms are shortness of breath, pneumonia, and continued fevers.
- ☀ **You get a stuffy nose. Could it be Covid?** Maybe. It is not a primary symptom of Covid-19. If all you have is a stuffy nose, it is likely a cold. A productive, wet cough is also a symptom of a cold, whereas Covid-19 has presented with a dry cough, especially with a loss of smell/taste.
- ☀ **Should you get the flu shot this year?** Yes. The flu shot bolsters your immune response, so if you get this year's flu shot, you can lessen the duration and severity of the flu. It's like a workout of your immune system: ready for a fight. Another benefit is that you can help prevent the spread of the flu to more vulnerable populations, like the very young and old. There is no evidence that a flu shot will prevent you from getting Covid-19, but a strengthened immune response will help your body battle the virus.
- ☀ **Can you get both Covid-19 and the flu?** It is possible. They are two different viruses. Covid-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the flu is caused by one of the many influenza viruses. Not enough data and research are out there to let doctors know how one could affect the other. Having the flu shot will help doctors understand these viruses better and your healthcare provider will likely ask if you've had one if you come down with flu-like symptoms.
- ☀ **Spread:** You can be contagious with a virus before you have symptoms and both are spread primarily through close contact of respiratory droplets. Covid-19 affects certain populations and age groups more, such as older populations and people with underlying medical conditions, and has been seen to quickly affect more people than the seasonal flu.

Providers around the world will be documenting illnesses this winter in detail to study what affects the different regions and how viruses spread. If you do feel ill, please call your healthcare provider and try to keep track of the course of your illness. Remember to protect yourself and others by isolating yourself, wearing a mask, cleaning surfaces frequently, covering your coughs and sneezes, and avoid sharing personal items. There is still much to be learned about the coronavirus.

Southern Oregon, you can be a part of the solution for many.

The following articles were referenced for this newsletter:

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

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/flu-vs-covid-ways-to-identify-symptoms-and-differences-11600088401>