



# Symptoms of COVID-19

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## KEY POINTS

- People with COVID-19 have a wide range of symptoms ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.
- Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.
- Symptoms may start as mild, and some people will progress to more severe symptoms.



## Signs and Symptoms

The following list does not include all possible symptoms. Symptoms may change with new COVID-19 variants and can vary depending on vaccination status. Possible symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- New loss of taste or smell
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

## Feeling Sick?

[Stay home and away from others](#) (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have symptoms that aren't better explained by another cause.

Seek health care promptly for testing and/or treatment if you have [risk factors for severe illness; treatment](#) may help lower your risk of severe illness.

## When to seek emergency help

Look for emergency warning signs\* for COVID 19:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Depending on skin tone, lips, nail beds and skin may appear pale, gray, or blue.

If someone is showing any of these signs, call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility. Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

*\*This list does not include all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.*

## Difference between flu and COVID-19

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a coronavirus named SARS-CoV-2, and flu is caused by infection with one of the influenza viruses. You cannot tell the difference between flu and COVID-19 by symptoms alone because some of the symptoms are the same.

Some nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs), including PCR tests, can differentiate between flu and COVID-19 at the same time. If one of these tests is not available, many [testing locations](#) provide flu and COVID-19 tests separately.

**KEEP READING:**  
Similarities and Differences between Flu and COVID-19

## Resources

### Videos

[Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(youtube.com\)](#)

### SOURCES

**CONTENT SOURCE:**  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; Coronavirus and Other Respiratory Viruses Division