



HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

Testing Best Way to Know Difference Between Cold, Flu or COVID

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Medical experts say the only way to know for sure if you have the common cold, flu or COVID-19 is to get a test because **symptoms** can be similar.

The flu and COVID-19 have common symptoms, such as **cough**, **fever**, tiredness and muscle soreness. The viruses can all spread before people know they are sick.

Many people who have COVID-19 do not feel sick but they can still spread the virus.

Important differences

The main difference with COVID-19 is people sometimes lose their ability to smell and taste.

With flu, fevers are more common.

With colds, people usually have throat pain or nasal **congestion**.

The viruses are separate. It is, however, possible to become sick with more than one at the same time.

Some people are calling the combination of flu and COVID-19 “flurona.”

Kristen Coleman is an assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. She said the number of people with flu and COVID-19 will increase in the coming weeks and months as the northern hemisphere enters flu season.

Testing is the best way to find out which virus you have.

While tests are in short supply in some parts of the world, Coleman said the best way to find out is to visit a **pharmacy**, where you can be tested for both flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

As soon as you know which illness you have, doctors can help with treatment.

Coleman said that in normal times, laboratories can find out if you have the common cold. However, right now, most are focused on testing for COVID-19.

One way to reduce your chances of having a problem with flu and COVID is to get vaccinated, experts say. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it is safe to get the flu vaccine and a third COVID-19 shot, or booster, at the same time.

I'm Dan Friedell

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on reporting by Victoria Milko of The Associated Press.

Are you wondering if you have one of the three illnesses? Tell us in the Comments Section and visit our Facebook page.

Words in This Story

symptom – *n.* a change in the body or mind which indicates that a disease is present

cough – *n.* a physical condition or illness that causes someone to cough

fever – *n.* a body temperature that is higher than normal

congestion – *n. related to a part of the body:* blocked with fluid (such as blood or mucus)

pharmacy – *n.* a store or part of a store in which drugs and medicines are prepared and sold

