

Comparing Influenza and COVID-19



Long-term Care Facilities

Managing a respiratory outbreak may present challenges due to the presence of both influenza and COVID-19 in the community. Many symptoms of influenza overlap with symptoms of COVID-19 which could make it difficult to know which virus is affecting staff and residents. When residents have either influenza or COVID-19 symptoms and it is unclear the cause, it is best to place the resident in the most protective transmission based precautions, COVID-19 Aerosol Contact Precautions.

Below is a table that compares the two viruses.

	Influenza (Flu)	SARS CoV-2 (COVID-19)
Onset of symptoms after exposure	2 - 4 days	2 -14 days, depending on the variant
Contagious (may be longer in certain populations)	3 - 7 days after and possibly 1 day before onset of symptoms	7 - 10 days after and possibly 2 days before onset of symptoms
Spread	<p>Person-to-person in respiratory droplets (within six feet) when infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks</p> <p>Possibly aerosol in close vicinity or contaminated surfaces</p>	<p>Person-to-person in respiratory droplets (within six feet) when infected person sneezes, coughs, or talks</p> <p>Possibly aerosol or contaminated surfaces</p>

<p>Transmission Based Precautions</p> <p>(In addition to standard precautions)</p>	<p><u>Droplet Precautions</u></p> <p>PPE Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close fitting Medical, Surgical, or Procedural mask (minimum requirement) • N95 recommended during AGP • Eye protection <p>Duration (residents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 days after symptom onset or 24 hours after fever and respiratory symptoms resolve - whichever is longer. • Use clinical judgment for young children or immunocompromised who may shed virus for longer periods of time 	<p><u>Aerosol Contact Precautions</u></p> <p>PPE Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIOSH Approved N95 Respirator • Eye protection • Gown • Gloves <p>Duration (residents)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days after positive test if asymptomatic. • 10 days after onset of symptoms and at least 24 hours have passed since the last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms have improved.
<p>Symptoms</p>	<p>May include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cough • Fatigue • Sore Throat • Runny or stuffy nose • Body Aches • Headache • Diarrhea (more common in children than adults) • Shortness of breath 	<p>May include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Cough • Fatigue • Sore Throat • Runny or stuffy nose • Body Aches • Headache • Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea • Shortness of Breath • Change or loss of taste or smell

Vaccination	Seasonal flu vaccine	Primary series and boosters, year round
Outbreak Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Test symptomatic residents immediately ● Testing potentially exposed residents is not routine practice (unless symptomatic) ● Routine surveillance testing of asymptomatic residents not currently recommended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Test symptomatic residents immediately ● Test asymptomatic, potentially exposed residents ● Routine surveillance testing of asymptomatic residents may be recommended during outbreak
Antiviral Treatment and Prophylaxis	<p>Residents with confirmed or suspected influenza:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antiviral treatment used as soon as possible. Testing not needed to confirm diagnosis. <p>Residents who are asymptomatic and may have been exposed to influenza:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antiviral Prophylaxis used as soon as possible. Testing not needed unless symptomatic. 	<p>Residents with test confirmed COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antiviral Treatment used for individuals that meet additional criteria <p>Residents who are asymptomatic or may have been exposed to COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antiviral Prophylaxis not recommended