

Have you gotten your flu vaccination?

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Flu season is getting underway in the U.S. while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to surge in some areas. Both the flu and COVID-19 are respiratory illnesses that are highly contagious, but they are caused by different viruses. The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year.

"While we don't have a vaccine yet for COVID-19, we do have a flu vaccine," says Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a Mayo Clinic pediatric infectious diseases physician. "We are strongly recommending everyone over 6 months of age to get the [flu vaccine](#) this year as a way to decrease their risk of becoming ill, their need to become hospitalized, or from dying from influenza."

"It's impossible to look at someone and know whether they have COVID-19 or influenza. Doing whatever you can to prevent influenza infection in yourself and your family is really important this year," says Dr. Rajapakse. "One of the best ways to do that is by getting a flu shot."

"The symptoms of both diseases are very similar and have almost complete overlap," Dr. Rajapakse says. "If you can protect yourself from flu this year, that will also really help our health care systems we expect there to be strain from people who have

COVID-19."

COVID-19 and the flu have many signs and symptoms in common, including:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Tiredness
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting, but this is more common in children than in adults

"And as much as we can minimize the number of people who get ill from influenza and need care in a hospital, the better our health care systems will be able to cope with the influx of patients with COVID-19," says Dr. Rajapakse.

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