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COVID-19 vs. FLU vs. RSV: How to tell the difference.

Between respiratory infections

A respiratory tract infection is an infection of the lung, airways, sinuses, or throat. While respiratory infections occur year-round, there is a significant increase in these infections during the fall and winter months [cold and flu season] when people tend to spend more time inside.

What is the difference between the flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

The flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus {RSV} are all highly contagious respiratory infections caused by viruses. The flu by influenza virus, COVID-19 by SARS-CoV-2 virus and RSV by respiratory syncytial virus. It is possible for a person to be infected with multiple viruses at the same time.

What causes the flu?

The flu is caused by the influenza virus and spreads easily during the winter months when people spend time together indoors. There are many strains of the influenza virus, and the virus can change from year to year.

What causes COVID-19?

COVID-19 is caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a family of viruses named for their corona-like shape which includes SARS-CoV-1 which emerged in 2002 and commonly infect humans.

What is RSV?

RSV is caused by the respiratory syncytial virus, a highly contagious virus that can infect children and adults.

In adults and older children, RSV is typically a mild illness very to the common cold, in infants and the elderly, the symptoms can be more severe.

What are the symptoms of the flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

- 1 Fevers
- 2 Chills
- 3 Headaches
- 4 Cough
- 5 Muscle soreness
- 6 Fatigue
- 7 Sore Throat
- 8 Vomiting
- 9 Diarrhea
- 10 Shortness of breath
- 11 Runny Nose

How do I treat the flu, COVID-19, and RSV?

Viruses are significantly different from bacteria, and treatments such as an antibiotic won't work on viral infections. For this reason, vaccines are the drug of choice. There are currently multiple FDA-authorized vaccines for SARS-CoV-2, but some drugs and treatments can help combat disease once they occur. If you think you may be infected, ask your provider about treatment options, additionally a COVID-19 test.