












Comparison of COVID-19, influenza, common cold, and gastrointestinal (GI) illness

	COVID-19	Influenza (Flu)	Cold	GI Illness (Stomach “Flu”)
Caused by	SARS-CoV-2 virus	Influenza A or Influenza B viruses	Many different kinds of viruses such as rhinovirus or adenovirus	Norovirus (or Norwalk-like viruses) is the most common, but there are many causes of stomach upset
Symptoms appear quickly	Sometimes	Yes	No. Symptoms appear gradually	Yes
Prevention	Getting the COVID-19 vaccine provides protection from the SARS-CoV-2 virus (also known as COVID-19)	Getting the influenza vaccine every year protects against the strains of the virus going around that season	Cannot be prevented by immunization	Cannot be prevented by immunization
Symptoms				
 Fever	Common	Common	Rare	Sometimes
 Fatigue	Common	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
 Cough	Common	Common	Common	No
 Sneezing	Rare	Sometimes	Common	No
 Aches and pains	Common	Common	Sometimes	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Common	No
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
 Diarrhea	Common	Sometimes (especially for children)	Rare	Common
 Headaches	Common	Common	Rare	Sometimes
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	Sometimes	No	No
 Loss of smell or taste	Sometimes	No	No	No

Sources: Health Canada, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention