



Erie County Health Department
An Accredited Public Health Department

Erie County Community Health Center
A Federally Qualified Health Center

Peter T. Schade, MPH, RS
Health Commissioner



Date: October 22, 2020
To: All Local Media
From: Peter T. Schade, MPH, RS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Limiting the Spread of COVID-19 and Influenza (Flu)

Reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses, such as influenza (flu) and COVID-19, is more important now than ever. The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious viruses which may cause severe symptoms. Common symptoms that COVID-19 and the flu share include:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Community spread is more prevalent in COVID-19 than the flu, as it may take longer for people to show symptoms after exposure, may cause more serious illness or complications, and people may remain contagious for longer. It may be hard to tell the difference between the flu and COVID-19 based on symptoms alone, therefore testing may be needed to confirm a diagnosis.

Severe cases of the flu are preventable. Everyone over 6 months of age should receive an annual flu vaccine. Schedule an appointment with the Erie County Community Health Center to receive your flu vaccine. Currently there is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus by practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing your hands. Do not leave it up to chance, if you are experiencing any common flu or COVID-19 symptoms, stay home until your symptoms have resolved. If your symptoms become severe or prolonged, seek medical attention immediately. Contact your primary care provider or the Erie County Community Health Center at (419)-626-5623 ext. 174 to make an appointment to be tested for both the flu and COVID-19.

Board of Health: Linda Miller-Moore (Board President); Michael D. Kaufman, Esq. (President Pro-Tem); Richard R. Keller, MD; Marsha D. Cooper, MD; Richard Bulan; Julie Foster; Joey Supina; Dina C. Bauer, DPM; Leroy E. Sizemore; Charles M. Murray; Lawrence O. Leaman

Flu Prevention During Coronavirus Pandemic

Fall and winter months bring the flu season. Here is what you need to know to help protect you and your family from the flu and COVID-19

FLU

Flu shot. A flu shot protects you and your family from most strains of the flu.



PREVENTION



COVID-19

Physical distancing, mask wearing, frequent hand washing. These important safety measures help prevent COVID-19 and also protect against the flu..

SYMPTOMS

Flu and COVID-19 can have similar symptoms. Call a doctor or health care center if you have any of these symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Cough
- Stuffy or runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- New fatigue / feeling tired or without energy
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- New loss of taste or smell



WHAT TO EXPECT



Fever and aches should end within five days. Coughing and fatigue/feeling tired or not having energy can last about two weeks. See your doctor if symptoms get worse.

Some people may never have symptoms. Recovery can take up to two weeks for mild cases, or six weeks for severe cases.



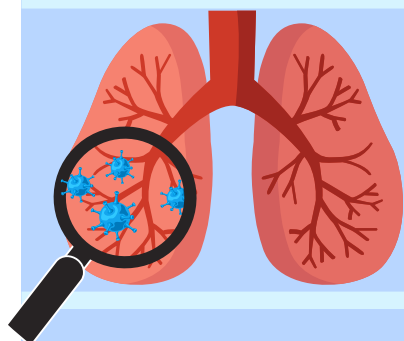
TREATMENT

Rest, fever reducer (such as acetaminophen), and an antiviral medicine to reduce the amount of time you have the flu and prevent complications.



Mild cases: rest, fever reducers and cough medicine.
Serious cases: hospitalization, breathing support with a ventilator or other therapies.

COMPLICATIONS



Flu can turn into pneumonia, and very severe cases can be fatal.

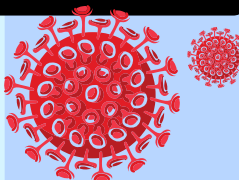
This disease can result in pneumonia and lasting damage to your lungs, kidneys, heart and brain. COVID-19 can be fatal.*

*More research is needed, but doctors and scientists currently believe that the death rate of COVID-19 could be 10 times higher (or more) than most strains of the flu.



CAUSE

It is caused by several different influenza viruses that change each year; which is why there is a new vaccine each flu season.



This disease is caused by a coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, which emerged late in 2019.