

Health Solutions

Allergy symptoms versus COVID-19 symptoms

Spring is here and for many, brings with it seasonal allergies. With COVID-19 being top of mind it's important to know which symptoms point to allergies and which may be indicative of COVID-19.

Allergy symptoms	Coronavirus symptoms
Some allergy symptoms occur immediately after exposure to an allergen, while others take hours or days to appear.	Symptoms may appear within two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.
Sneezing	Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
Runny or stuffy nose	Dry cough
Watery, itchy eyes	Fever or chills
Itchy sinuses, throat, or ear canals	Fatigue
Ear congestion	Muscle or body aches
Postnasal drainage	Headache
Less common symptoms include:	Loss of taste or smell that didn't exist previously
Headache	Sore throat
Shortness of breath	Congestion or runny nose
Wheezing	Nausea or vomiting
Headache	Diarrhea

This list isn't inclusive. Refer to the [guidelines](#) set out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and those of your local health experts to prevent the spread of the virus.

Difference in duration

According to Dr. Arash Zohoor, family physician, "For my patients the biggest difference is the duration of the symptoms, with allergies often being longer lasting. This is different from COVID-19 symptoms which will increase, peak, and then usually resolve within less than two weeks. Allergies will linger for a month or more and be fairly consistent throughout that period.

This year with the higher pollen count, allergies may be more severe and cause some confusion with coronavirus, but seasonal allergy sufferers know they have an allergy which returns every year, and they are familiar with the symptoms of their allergies, so they can more easily differentiate".

According to Dr. Philip Hébert, family medicine, "Allergies are quite distinguishable, with symptoms in spring and fall which will include runny nose, sneezing, watery and itchy eyes. These symptoms would not be present with COVID-19. COVID-19 can present with no symptoms at all but if you do have symptoms they will be acute and not as prolonged as allergies. Also the absence of fever and body aches with allergies is a clear differentiator".

This article is not intended to provide comprehensive medical advice. If you have concerns, contact your doctor and use general best practices.