

# Academy Health and Wellness

## May Newsletter

### COVID 19 vs. the Common Cold vs. Seasonal Allergies

As the flowers bloom and Spring is in the air, this is typically the time of year when our seasonal allergies can become worse and we tend to get a cold. COVID 19, common colds and seasonal allergies have similar signs and symptoms, but there are some differences between these illnesses. This can make it difficult to decide if you should send your child to school or see your doctor.

If you have signs or symptoms of COVID 19, it is important to consult with your medical provider and get tested. However, because these illnesses have similar symptoms, it is important to understand the differences in the symptoms, what causes them, how they are spread, treated and prevented.

#### COVID 19 vs. the Common Cold

Many viruses are air born so they are spread through respiratory droplets that are released when you cough, breathe, talk, sneeze or sing. The droplets can land in your mouth or nose and be inhaled. Virus' can also spread if you touch a surface or object that has the virus on it and then you touch your eyes, nose or mouth. However, this isn't considered to be the main way of transmission.

COVID 19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, while most colds are caused by the rhinovirus. These viruses spread in similar ways but there are a few differences. COVID 19 symptoms usually appear in 2-14 days after exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Signs and symptoms of the common cold typically appear 1-3 days after exposure to a cold causing virus.

There is no cure for the common cold. Treatment can include pain relievers and over-the-counter cold remedies such as decongestants and antihistamines. Unlike COVID-19, a cold is usually harmless. Most people recover from a common cold in three to 10 days, although some colds may last as long as two or three weeks.

<b><i>Symptom or Sign</i></b>	<b><i>Covid 19</i></b>	<b><i>Cold</i></b>
<i>Cough</i>	<i>Usually (dry)</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Muscle Ache</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Tiredness</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Sneezing</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Sore Throat</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Stuffy/Runny Nose</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Fever</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Diarrhea</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Nausea/V omitting</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>New loss of taste/smell</i>	<i>Usually (early — often without a runny or stuffy nose)</i>	<i>Sometimes (especially with a stuffy nose)</i>

## COVID 19 vs. Seasonal Allergies

Seasonal allergies aren't caused by a virus. They are responses from the immune system. These responses are triggered by exposure to allergens, such as grass, flower or tree pollen. Again, COVID 19 and seasonal allergies may cause the same signs and symptoms, however, there are differences.

<i>Symptom or Sign</i>	<i>COVID 19</i>	<i>Allergy</i>
<i>Cough</i>	<i>Usually (dry)</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Fever</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Muscle Aches</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Tiredness</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Itchy nose, eyes, mouth or inner ear</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Sneezing</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Sore Throat</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Rarely</i>
<i>Runny/Stuffy nose</i>	<i>Usually</i>	<i>Usually</i>
<i>Pink Eye</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>
<i>Nausea/Vomiting</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>Diarrhea</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<i>New loss of taste/smell</i>	<i>Usually (early-often without a runny or stuffy nose)</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>

COVID 19 can cause shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. Seasonal allergies don't usually cause these symptoms, unless you have a respiratory condition such as asthma that is triggered by pollen.

Treatment of seasonal allergies can include over the counter medications or prescription antihistamines, decongestants and steroids. Seasonal allergies can last for weeks.

Research has shown that you can decrease your chance of getting COVID 19 or a cold by: wearing a face mask, social distancing, avoiding crowded indoor places, washing your hands with soap and water often for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer, not touching your eyes, nose and mouth and cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas.

Seasonal allergies can be prevented or decreased by avoiding your triggers. Ex: if you are allergic to pollen, try to stay inside with windows and doors shut when pollen is high.

Wearing a face mask to slow the spread of COVID 19 can provide some protection from seasonal allergies, by stopping you from inhaling some large particles of pollen. But, small particles will still get through the mask. Remember to wash your mask often.

It's important to know the facts, but do not ever hesitate to consult with your medical provider. If you need further clarification on this month's topic or any other health questions, please feel free to contact me.

Stay safe,

Marianne Traverson, RN, MSN

Health & Wellness Director

