



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Similarities and Differences Between COVID-19 and Influenza

COVID-19 and influenza both cause respiratory illness and the symptoms can be very similar. However, COVID-19 appears to cause more severe disease than seasonal influenza for some people. COVID-19 is a new virus that no one has immunity to, so many people are more likely to become infected. Some of the similarities between Influenza and COVID-19 include:

- They spread from person to person through droplets in the air from an infected person that is coughing, sneezing, or talking.
- They both may cause fever, cough, body aches, and fatigue.
- Neither the flu or COVID-19 can be treated with antibiotics and are treated by addressing the symptoms such as reducing a fever. However, influenza may be treated by anti-virals if identified early.

While there's a lot of overlap between them, there are also key differences to look out for. Some of the differences include:

- One major symptom of COVID-19 includes shortness of breath.
- A vaccine is available and effective to prevent seasonal flu, but at this time there isn't a vaccine available for COVID-19.
- Mortality for COVID-19 appears higher than for influenza, especially seasonal influenza.

"Knowing the similarities and differences between these two viruses can help you stay informed so you can protect yourself and others from spreading either virus," said Maggie Mann, Southeastern Idaho Public Health Director. "We continue to emphasize the importance of practicing hand washing, social distancing and home isolation to disrupt the spread of both influenza and the coronavirus." There are measures everyone can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These measures include:

- Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practicing social distancing (at least 6 ft between you and other people)

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Every day, in every way, empowering & improving health!

- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Coughing or sneezing into your elbow or use a tissue to cover it, then throwing the tissue in the trash.

For more information:

- Visit SIPH's website at siphidaho.org.
- Call SIPH's COVID-19 hotline Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm, at 208.234.5875.
- Watch SIPH's District Director on Facebook Live, facebook.com/siphidaho, Monday-Friday at 11 am.

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