

# COVID vs Flu vs. Common Cold vs. RSV: What You Need to Know

VIRUS	LEVEL OF INFECTIVITY	TIME FROM EXPOSURE TO INFECTION	SYMPTOMS	PREVALENCE IN CHILDREN	VACCINE AVAILABILITY
 <p><b>COMMON COLD</b> <i>Rhinovirus</i></p>	<p>Less contagious</p> <p>Symptomatic individuals shed the virus during the first 2 to 3 days of infection.</p>	2 to 3 days	<p>Cough</p> <p>Low-grade fever</p> <p>Sneezing</p> <p>Sore throat</p> <p>Stuffy nose</p>	<p>Common</p> <p>Most children experience 2 to 4 colds per year; frequently associated with asthma exacerbations.</p>	None
 <p><b>SEASONAL INFLUENZA</b> <i>Influenza virus (A and B)</i></p>	<p>Contagious</p> <p>Viral shedding occurs 24 hours before symptoms appear, peaking around day 3 of illness.</p>	1 to 4 days	<p>Body aches</p> <p>Chills</p> <p>Cough</p> <p>Fatigue</p> <p>Fever</p> <p>Headache</p> <p>Sore throat</p> <p>Stuffy nose</p>	<p>Common</p> <p>Children younger than 2 are at highest risk for more severe disease.</p>	Multiple approved
 <p><b>COVID-19</b> <i>Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)</i></p>	<p>More contagious</p> <p>Viral shedding occurs 2 to 3 days before symptoms appear, peaking around day 3 of illness. However, there can be viral shedding without ever developing symptoms.</p>	2 to 14 days	<p>Body aches</p> <p>Chills</p> <p>Cough</p> <p>Diarrhea</p> <p>Fatigue</p> <p>Fever</p> <p>Headache</p> <p>Loss of smell/taste</p> <p>Nausea/vomiting</p> <p>Shortness of breath</p> <p>Stuffy/runny nose</p>	<p>Becoming more common, and asymptomatic children are possible</p> <p>Typically children have mild symptoms, and rarely they develop multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) weeks after a SARS-CoV-2 infection.</p>	<p>Two- and three-dose vaccine approved for ages 6 months–4 years</p> <p>Two-dose vaccine and booster approved for ages 5 and older</p> <p>Multiple vaccines and boosters approved for adults</p>
 <p><b>RSV</b> <i>Respiratory syncytial virus</i></p>	<p>Very contagious</p> <p>Symptoms can last 7 to 10 days, but some kids can develop a cough that takes up to six weeks to clear</p>	4 to 6 days	<p>Cough</p> <p>Runny nose</p> <p>Sneezing</p> <p>Fever</p> <p>Wheezing</p>	<p>Common</p> <p>Infants are at high risk for severe disease, including pneumonia or bronchiolitis, an inflammation of the small airways in the lungs.</p>	None