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## How do I know if I have the flu or COVID?

By Eryn Dion | Gannett New England

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Fever. Chills. Cough. Sore throat. Shortness of breath. Fatigue.

Sound familiar? They're all symptoms of COVID-19. They're all also common symptoms of the flu.

That's not where the similarities end. Body aches and headaches, as well as gastrointestinal issues, even runny nose, can present in both illnesses. As we head into flu season, how can patients tell the difference?

Health experts agree that, in some cases, because the illnesses present in such similar ways, it's going to come down to testing. Dr. Ali S. Raja, executive vice chair for the Massachusetts General Hospital emergency medicine department, told The Providence Journal that those presenting with symptoms such as shortness of breath, cough and fever, will likely need to be tested for both flu and COVID-19.

"The symptoms of flu and coronavirus are exceptionally similar," said Raja.

"There is no way to tell the difference without testing them for both."

Vermont Health Commissioner Mark Levine has said that a test is being developed that can test for both flu and COVID-19 at the same time, but there is no timeline on when it might be available.

And this is where getting a flu shot comes in, because it allows doctors to rule out the flu in patients who have been vaccinated and to treat the patient as presumptive positive for COVID-19 without having to administer a test. It should be noted, however, that it is possible to have the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

For a quick refresher, these are common symptoms of the flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, symptoms include:

- fever, or feeling feverish chills
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headaches
- fatigue
- possible vomiting and diarrhea

*Paul Parker with The Providence Journal and Ethan Bakuli with the Burlington Free Press contributed to this report.*