



-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

Why Getting Your Flu Shot is Important During the COVID-19 Pandemic



Steven Swain, M.D., FAAFP, a board certified family medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center’s medical staff and SRMC Primary Care, sees patients of all ages at two SRMC Primary Care locations in Salem and Damascus.

(SALEM, OHIO) – November 3, 2020 – Every year, millions of Americans get sick with influenza, commonly known as the seasonal flu. This year, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, protecting yourself from the flu is more important than ever.

Symptoms of Flu and COVID-19

“The flu and COVID-19 are both highly-contagious respiratory illnesses; however, they are caused by different viruses,” explained Steven Swain, M.D., FAAFP, a board certified family medicine physician affiliated with Salem Regional Medical Center’s medical staff and SRMC Primary Care. “Because both illnesses share many of the same symptoms, it may be hard to tell them apart if you become ill.”

Some of the most common symptoms of flu, which are similar to COVID-19, include:

- Fever and/or chills
- Cough
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain and/or body aches
- Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea (more common among children than adults)

“Symptoms of COVID-19 that are different from the flu include the sudden loss of taste or smell. Also, people typically develop flu symptoms within 1-4 days after becoming infected, while COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus,” Dr. Swain noted.

Benefits of the Flu Vaccine

Because there is the possibility of being infected with both the flu and COVID-19, it is especially important to be vaccinated this year against the flu.

“Getting a yearly flu shot is one of the most effective ways to decrease your chance of becoming sick with the flu,” Dr. Swain said. “The flu can cause severe illness and may even lead to life-threatening complications – especially in children, adults age 65 and older, pregnant women and those with certain chronic health conditions.”

“While there are many different types of the flu virus and the shot doesn't protect against all of them, it can still help to reduce the severity of your symptoms if you are infected. The flu vaccine is safe for most people, and contains a killed or weakened virus that cannot cause an infection. You should talk to your health care provider to see if the flu vaccine is right for you.”

Healthy Habits

In addition to getting a flu shot, practicing healthy habits can help lower your risk of any respiratory illness, including:

- Wearing a mask
- Social distancing
- Washing hands frequently
- Covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Staying home if you are not feeling well
- Getting appropriate sleep each night
- Making healthy food choices
- Exercising on a regular basis
- Finding healthy outlets for stress relief

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