

# The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

[www.TheAllergyClinic.com](http://www.TheAllergyClinic.com)

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## Allergies, Cold/Flu or COVID- How To Make Sense of It All

Although we as a community have come a long way as compared to a year ago, COVID continues to impact our daily lives. As vaccination efforts ramp up, we can only hope that we can eventually put the pandemic behind us. However, in the meantime, several companies have reinstated “going back to the office policies” and “in-person” school has resumed. It is only natural to feel anxious about these steps to normalcy, but for many, these changes can be overwhelming, partly because of the overlap between allergies and respiratory illnesses.

### Covid -19 Infections

Loss of smell and shortness of breath may distinguish COVID-19 from other respiratory infections, according to Ula Hwang, MD, a physician in Yale Medicine’s Department of Emergency Medicine in New Haven, Conn. In a study published last year, it was found that almost 80% of patients who reported a loss of smell or taste tested positive for COVID-19 antibodies. COVID-19 is also frequently associated with fever and, possibly, cough, diarrhea, nausea, and/or vomiting. If there are concerns about a possible COVID infection, get tested as soon as possible.

**Flus:** Flus tend to come on suddenly and these infections are usually associated with fever, chills, headaches, body aches and fatigue. Because of the pandemic and related preventative measures (masking, social distancing, school closure and reduced traveling),

there was a decrease in the incidence of flu infections in 2020. However, with things “opening back up” and kids returning to school, flu rates may again increase this fall/winter. To reduce the chance of contracting the flu, a flu vaccine is still highly recommended.

### Colds:

Both COVID-19 and the common cold are caused by viruses. COVID-19 is caused by SARS-CoV-2, while the common cold is most often caused by rhinoviruses. The common cold is usually associated with a runny, congested nose, a sore throat; and sometimes fatigue or a low-grade fever. Fortunately, most colds resolve within a week and typically do not require treatment with antibiotics.

### Allergies:

If you are experiencing sneezing, itchy eyes, nose, or throat, allergies could be the cause—even in winter, says J. Allen Meadows, MD, immediate past president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. Allergens such as dust mite, animal dander and mold are more prevalent in the fall and winter. This is the time of the year when people spend more time indoors and as cooler temperatures approach, people start to use forced air heating systems, a significant source of dust mite.

With all that’s been said, wash your hands frequently, continue to wear a mask, social distance and get vaccinated. Keep your allergies under the best possible control by taking medications as prescribed. If you are on allergy shots/allergy drops, get them regularly as scheduled. Keeping your allergies under optimal control, together with the above mentioned measures, can help minimize the risk of developing a respiratory illnesses.

**In observance of the Labor Day Holiday, the office will be closed on Monday September 6.**