













COVID-19 symptoms versus seasonal infections

As we head into the winter months, it is common for colds and similar infections to circulate. It is important to be clear on how COVID-19 symptoms differ from the other more seasonal infections and what you should do if you have concerns.

The table below outlines the differing symptoms for common infections.

 healthmanagement	Covid-19 (Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus)	Flu (Flu comes on suddenly, symptoms can be present from day 1)	Cold (Gradual onset of symptoms)	Allergies
 Fever (over 37.8C)	Common	Common	Sometimes	No
 Cough	Common (usually a new and continuous dry cough)	Common - Dry cough	Sometimes	Occasionally (usually dry)
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No	Common
 Fatigue	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
 Headache	Sometimes	Common	Common	Sometimes
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common	Itchy throat
 Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common	No
 Runny/stuffy nose	Rare	Sometimes	Common	Common
 Sneezing	Rare	No	Common	Sometimes
 Itchy eyes	No	No	No	Yes
 Loss of smell and taste	Common	Rare	Rare	Rare

COVID-19 Symptoms

The main symptoms to be aware of for COVID-19 are:

- > Fever / High Temperature – Over 37.8C
- > A new, continuous cough. A coronavirus cough means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or three or more coughing fits or 'episodes' in 24 hours
- > Loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

If your employees develop any of these symptoms they must self-isolate and should book a COVID-19 virus test as soon as possible, on the day they believe they have symptoms. Line managers can refer your employee using our case management system. Access our [COVID-19 testing programme](#).

If your employees test is negative, they will be able to return to work. If they don't feel well enough to attend, normal sick absence policy will apply.



Cold or Flu-like Symptoms

If you have an employee experiencing cold or flu like symptoms such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and do not need to self-isolate.

Sneeze droplets can spread infections though, so they should **catch** them in a tissue, put it in the **bin** and then **wash** their hands.

Flu usually comes on suddenly and sufferers will often experience muscle aches, chills, headaches, tiredness, a sore throat and a runny or stuffed nose, along with a cough. It feels worse than a heavy cold.

Colds tend to develop more gradually and are less severe. Along with a cough, there may be sneezing and sore throat and a runny nose.

Fever, chills, muscle aches and headaches are rare.

If your employee feels well enough to attend work, they should do, in the event that they don't feel well enough, they should report their absence as per your organisation's policy and normal sick pay would apply.

