“TWINDEMIC” FAQ
As of January 4, 2021

1. What is the “Twindemic”?
The term “Twindemic” has been coined to describe an expected, and possibly severe, overlap of cases of COVID-19 and the flu.

2. Are there ways to prevent this dual infection?
Proper hand washing is the BEST way to stop the spread of infection. If you do not have access to water, use hand sanitizer. Further, continuing to wear face masks and to social distance will help because, like COVID-19, the flu is spread through respiratory droplets released by coughing, sneezing, and talking. Thus, it’s important to keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others whenever possible.

Finally, we encourage all students to get a flu shot. October is the best time to be vaccinated in order to ensure coverage for the whole season. Please note that protective antibodies are not fully developed in the body for roughly two weeks after receiving the inoculation.

During the 2018-2019 flu season, vaccinations prevented: 1) an estimated 4.4 million influenza illnesses, 2) 2.3 million influenza-associated medical visits, 3) 58,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations, and 4) 3,500 influenza-associated deaths according to the CDC. A flu shot not only help you but also the people around you – particularly those with chronic health conditions, pregnant women, the elderly, and children.

3. How can I get the flu vaccine?
You can get a flu vaccine at any of three BMH ExpressCare locations. Further, the flu vaccine is available at most retail pharmacies, and SCDHEC offers flu shots through vaccine clinics. Take the PEBA Preventative Screening Voucher along with your insurance card to any participating provider. For a list of providers visit www.PEBAperks.com.

The vaccine is the quadrivalent version, which means that is covers for the 4 most prevalent strains of flu this season (versus the trivalent which only covers 3 strains). More info on this exact version can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/quadrivalent.htm.

4. Does getting a flu vaccine make me more susceptible to being infected by or becoming seriously ill from COVID-19?
There is no evidence to support the idea that getting a flu vaccine increases your risk of getting sick from coronavirus.

5. How does the spread of influenza compare with the spread of COVID-19?
Generally, influenza is spread most during the first 3 to 4 days of illness (onset of symptoms) – although some people are contagious for 5 to 7 days. That said, people can spread the flu one day before they actually become sick.
People with COVID-19 are most contagious 2 days before the onset of symptoms and for roughly 10 days after the onset of symptoms.

6. **How do symptoms of influenza compare with symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms overlap and, therefore, may be difficult to distinguish:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea

People with COVID may also experience loss of taste and/or smell.

**For more information:**

CDC information on the flu: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/spread.htm)