

Watch out for fake treatments, tests for flu, COVID-19

by Nora Crumley, Editorial Intern



If you see a treatment or cure for influenza or COVID-19 that looks too good to be true, it probably is.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is warning people about fake or unapproved products that claim to protect people from catching **influenza**, **COVID-19** or other viruses. These products could be unsafe. They include herbal teas, dietary supplements, mouthwashes, essential oils, tinctures, colloidal silver and air filters.

The FDA has not approved any over-the-counter medications or products that can prevent or cure influenza or COVID-19. These phrases often are on fake products:

- reduces the severity and length of illness,
- boosts your immunity,
- is a safe and effective alternative to the vaccine,
- treats a wide range of diseases,
- contains secret ingredients or
- includes personal testimonials.

The FDA also is warning people about COVID-19 test kits sold for at-home use without its approval. The FDA has approved one at-home test for people ages 14 years and older who have a doctor's prescription. Other ways to be tested for COVID-19 are to contact your health care provider or visit a testing site.

People also should be cautious about using online pharmacies that offer antiviral prescription medication at low prices without a doctor's prescription. These pharmacies usually are not in the United States. The medications may have harmful ingredients. If you use an online pharmacy, make sure it is **approved** (<https://bit.ly/fdabesaferx>).

If your child has symptoms of COVID-19 or influenza, call your pediatrician. The doctor can decide the best way to care for your child. Common symptoms of both illnesses include fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, extreme tiredness, muscle or body aches, headache, stuffy or runny nose, vomiting and diarrhea. One symptom more likely with COVID-19 is the loss of taste or smell.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends all children ages 6 months and older get a flu vaccine.



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Children 8 years old and younger need two doses given at least four weeks apart. A COVID-19 vaccine is not yet available for children under 16.

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