

Viewpoint: China's coronavirus is getting all the attention, but this year's flu season is more frightening

What we appear to be having this year is a [flu-the-trickster](#) season. And while that [new coronavirus is getting a lot of attention](#), here in the United States at least, the [plain old flu viruses](#) currently circulating in schools, subways, and public spaces are probably a much bigger threat.

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The [influenza](#) that produces miserable winters for many of us typically has two flavors, influenza A and influenza B. The A strains are usually the first to get here. The B strains come much later.

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But the reason it's shaping up to be a bad flu season is that, for some reason, [influenza B flipped the script](#) : It arrived way early—surprise!—and is now making a mess of the place. It's a dangerous head-scratcher. Usually flu season is still just simmering in December. Instead, led by the surge of [influenza](#) B infections, which can be particularly rough for kids, it was raging full boil as the holidays arrived. Flu [already has killed 54 children](#), more than [twice the number](#) of flu-related pediatric deaths reported at this point last year. Fifteen of those deaths were reported in just the last week, at a time when all eyes were on the coronavirus.

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