

Cold or Flu?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Colds and flu are both respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses. Flu and cold symptoms are quite similar. Flu symptoms usually occur (within 3–6 hours) sooner and with greater intensity than cold.

If you catch a cold you can expect to be sick for about 7–10 days. If you have the flu, you can expect to feel weak and fatigued up to 2 or 3 weeks; muscle aches, chill, sweats may come and go.

Cold Remedies:

- **Water and other fluids.** Keep well hydrated. Avoid alcohol, coffee and caffeinated sodas which can make dehydration worse.

- **Salt water.** Salt water gargle can temporarily relieve sore or scratchy throat. Use 1/2-teaspoon in 8 ounces of warm water.
- **Saline nasal sprays.** Most are safe and non-irritating, even for children. Saline sprays unlike nasal decongestants don't lead to a rebound effect or a worsening of symptoms when the medication is discontinued.

Flu Remedies:

- **Treat symptoms** using cold remedies
- **Rest**
- **Antiviral drugs.** Call your doctor if you suspect you have flu symptoms.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, high (100–102 degrees F); lasts 3–4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual; often severe
Fatigue, Weakness	Quite Mild	Can last up to 2–3 weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort/ Cough	Mild to moderate; hacking Cough	Common; can become severe
Complications	Sinus congestion, earaches	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening.
Prevention	Frequently hand-washing with soap and water Avoid contact with people who have colds	Annual flu shots Avoid people with the flu Anti-Viral medication—contact your doctor