

What is the common cold and flu?

The common cold and the flu are viral infections of the respiratory tract, which includes the throat, nose, airways and lungs.

How can I tell if I have a cold or the flu?

Cold Symptoms develop slowly and can include:

- ✔ Fever up to 102°F
- ✔ Runny or stuffy nose (often with green- or yellow-colored discharge)
- ✔ Sore throat
- ✔ Cough
- ✔ Sneezing
- ✔ Fatigue
- ✔ Muscle aches
- ✔ Headache
- ✔ Watery eyes

Cold symptoms generally are milder than flu symptoms.

Flu Symptoms usually appear suddenly and can include:

- ✔ Fever over 102°F
- ✔ Stuffy nose
- ✔ Nausea
- ✔ Chills and sweats
- ✔ Fatigue
- ✔ Muscle aches, especially in your back, arms and legs
- ✔ Cough
- ✔ Headache
- ✔ Loss of appetite

Although the common cold and the flu share many similar symptoms, they are 2 different conditions.

In most cases, you don't need to see your doctor when you have a cold or the flu.

Call your doctor if you have these cold and flu symptoms:

IN CHILDREN

- High fever (above 103°F), or a fever that lasts for more than 3 days
- Symptoms that last for more than 10 days
- Trouble breathing, fast breathing or wheezing
- Bluish skin color
- Earache or drainage from the ear
- Changes in mental state (such as not waking up, irritability or seizures)
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but return with a fever and a worse cough
- Worsening of a chronic medical condition (such as diabetes or heart disease)
- Vomiting or abdominal pain

IN ADULTS

- A high, prolonged fever (above 102°F) with fatigue and body aches
- Symptoms that last for more than 10 days or get worse instead of better
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest
- Fainting or feeling like you are about to faint
- Confusion or disorientation
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Severe sinus pain in your face or forehead
- Very swollen glands in the neck or jaw

There's no cure for the common cold or the flu.

All you can do to feel better is treat your symptoms while your body fights off the virus.



Things you can do to feel better

- Get plenty of rest
- Zinc 100mg/day at onset of symptoms can lessen length of illness
- Gargle with warm salt water a few times a day to relieve a sore throat
- Throat sprays or lozenges (Cepacol) may also help relieve the pain
- Use saline (salt water) nose drops to help loosen mucus
- Drink lots of fluids such as water and clear soups
- Ibuprofen, Advil, or Motrin 800mg (4 adult 200mg tabs) every 8 hours
- For children follow dosing guidelines on package insert
- Tylenol or acetaminophen 1000mg (2 extra strength tabs) every 8 hours
- For children follow dosing guidelines on package insert
- Dark honey: 2tbs every 2hrs for cough or mix in warm water and add lemon juice
- Prescription cough suppressants
- Decongestants such as pseudoephedrine. Sudafed
- Expectorants help thin mucus so it can be coughed up more easily. Mucinex
- Decongestant nasal sprays in adults. Afrin 1 spray each nostril at night x 3-5 nights
- Stop smoking and avoid secondhand smoke
- Antiviral medicines can shorten the length of time you are sick with the flu (Influenza)
- *Children and teenagers should not take Aspirin because it can cause Reye's syndrome*

What helps prevent catching a cold or flu?

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cough and sneeze into the inside of your elbow
- Clean common surfaces with anti-bacterial disinfectant.
- Get the influenza vaccine (flu shot) when it becomes available each fall. Some people who get the vaccine will still get the flu, but they will usually get a milder case than people who aren't vaccinated. The vaccine is especially recommended for people who are more likely to get really sick from flu-related complications.

You cannot get the flu from the flu shot.