

How can I tell if I have a Cold or the Flu?

Colds

Colds usually attack the nose and throat with sneezing, runny nose, and coughing. You may have a low fever (1 or 2 degrees over 98.6° F), sore throat, watery eyes, and aches. Colds can occur year around.

Flu

Flu attacks the lungs and causes a severe dry cough. It has the same symptoms as a cold but it hits harder, has a higher fever, and causes you to feel weak and tired. It will take about 5 days to start feeling better and 1-2 weeks to feel well again. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea usually are not the main symptoms of the flu. Flu season is from December through March.



See your doctor for:

- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Earache or ear drainage
- Severe facial or forehead pain
- Unable to drink fluids
- Confusion or change in alertness
- Not improving in 5 days

Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Nose congestion
- Body aches
- Headache
- Tired

Treatment

- Rest
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Avoid using alcohol or tobacco
- Take medicines, if needed, to relieve symptoms
- Prevent spreading flu and colds
 - Wash hands often
 - Cover your mouth if you cough
 - Get a flu shot each fall

Medicine for Colds and Flu

- **Fever or Aches:** Use Acetaminophen (Tylenol) or Ibuprofen (Advil).
- **Stuffy Nose:**
 - Decongestants with pseudoephedrine (Tylenol Sinus) can be used for people over six years old.
 - Salt-water nose drops or sprays (Ayr Saline Mist) can be used at any age.
- **Cough:** Use cough syrups with dextromethorphan (Robitussin DM).
- **For children under two years old:** Ask your doctor before giving over-the-counter medicine.
- **Antibiotics:** These are for bacterial infections and are **not** helpful for flu or colds.
- **Aspirin:** Should **not** be used in children or teenagers with the flu.
- **Antiviral medicine:** These are prescription medicines used for high-risk patients with the flu. They need to be started in the first 2 days of the illness.