




Is it a cold or the flu?

A cold is relatively harmless, but the flu can lead to more serious complications. Learn the signs and symptoms of both so you know when to seek appropriate treatment.

Symptoms

Cold:
Low or no fever



Flu:
Fever of 101° F or higher

Cold:
Sometimes a headache



Flu:
Always a headache

Cold:
Stuffy, runny nose




Flu:
Clear nose

Cold:
Sneezing




Flu:
Sometimes sneezing

Cold:
Mild, hacking cough



Flu:
Often severe cough

Cold:
Slight aches and pains




Flu:
Severe aches and pains

Cold:
Always sore throat



Flu:
Sometimes a sore throat

Cold:
Normal energy level



Flu:
Extreme exhaustion

When to call your doctor

Always consult a doctor if you're concerned about a cold or flu, but look out for these concerning symptoms.

Seek medical advice if you:

Are 6 months to 4 years old

**Babies under 6 months showing flu symptoms should be evaluated immediately*

Are pregnant

Have a chronic disease or heart, liver, kidney or lung condition

Have a suppressed immune system

Develop shortness of breath

Have a severe cough

Have a severe headache

Experience worsening symptoms

From the expert

"While colds may be a nuisance, they generally do not cause significant problems in healthy people. The flu can have you feeling poorly for up to three weeks and in some cases can cause much more severe consequences even if you're healthy, so stay protected and get your flu shot."



— Dr. Matthew Messoline, family medicine doctor
with Sharp Rees-Stealy Medical Group

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