

Is it a Cold ... or the Flu?

Uh oh. You're getting that achy feeling in your joints.

Your throat is scratchy and you've had a headache for days. There's no doubt you're getting sick, but is it a cold or the flu—and does it even matter? The flu generally comes on more quickly and body aches are a prominent feature. The flu can cause other health issues, so it helps to know the difference. Here's a quick guide.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Self-Care / Prevention
Onset	Gradual	Sudden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough and sneeze. Throw the tissue away after you use it. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper sleeve. ● Wash your hands often with soap and water. Take at least 20 seconds each time. When you can't wash your hands, use alcohol-based wipes or gels to clean your hands. ● Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. ● Try to avoid close contact with people and their things when they have a cold or flu symptoms. ● If you are sick, avoid contact with others. Stay home from work, school, and errands. ● Clean and disinfect commonly used objects, such as door handles, phones, light switches, and remote controls. ● Rest and drink plenty of fluids. Eat chicken soup. ● Use over-the-counter (OTC) saline nasal drops or spray as directed. ● Gargle with warm salt water. Mix 1/4 teaspoon of salt in 1 cup of warm water. ● Use a cool-mist vaporizer to add moisture to the air. ● Eat nutritious foods. Do regular exercise. Manage stress. Get enough sleep.
Body aches	Not usually	Almost always, often severe	
Congestion, runny nose, sore throat, sneezing	Almost always	Sometimes	
Cough	Cough with mucus	Often, mostly dry & hacking	
Fever	Rare, but mild if present	Almost always, usually high	
Exhaustion	Sometimes, but never extreme	Almost always, usually extreme	
Headache	Sometimes	Usually	
Location of symptoms	Above the neck	Entire body	
Typical duration	One to three weeks	About a week	
Prevention	Frequent hand-washing	Yearly flu vaccination	
Relief & Treatment	Rest, fluids, over-the-counter cold and anti-inflammatory meds	Call the Nurse Advice Line to see if flu testing, an antiviral medicine, or medical care is needed.	