

Do you have a cold or the flu?

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Usually high fever that comes on suddenly
Headache	Rare	Frequent
General aches and pains	Mild	Common Often severe
Weakness Fatigue	Quite mild	Can last 2 to 3 weeks moderate to extreme
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Chills	Uncommon	Common
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Cough	Hacking and coughing up mucus	Dry and don't cough up mucus
Chest discomfort	Mild to moderate	Can become severe
Sudden symptoms	Appear gradually	Symptoms can appear in 3 to 6 hours
Bed ridden	No	Frequently: 5 to 10 days
Complications	Sinus congestion, ear aches or infections	Lung and breathing problems (bronchitis, pneumonia, heart failure and can be life threatening)
Prevention	Clean hands well and often	Flu shot/flu mist and clean hands well and often
Treatment	Temporary relief of symptoms	Antivirals – best if given within 24 to 48 hours when symptoms start
Cause	Rhinovirus, RSV and other viruses	Influenza virus

This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.