

Cold & Flu

Colds enter your body through your nose or mouth. Germs travel when someone around you coughs or sneezes, with hand-to-hand contact with someone who is sick, or by using something a sick person has used such as utensils, lip balm, or a telephone. The flu enters your body like the cold does. Unlike a cold, the flu usually starts suddenly. If you are healthy you will probably recover from the flu in 3-10 days. However, if you have any of the risk factors listed in the box below, the flu can last longer or even be fatal.

Symptoms

COLD Symptoms

Mild fever
Watery eyes
Runny or stuffy nose
Muscle aches or soreness
Cough or sore throat
Headache
Sneezing

FLU Symptoms (Influenza)

Feeling very weak and tired
Fever
Cough or sore throat
Runny nose
Chills
Headache
Body aches

Flu Shots and Medication

An annual flu vaccine taken as a shot or nasal spray can prevent certain strains of the flu and can reduce the severity of the flu if you do get sick.

Antiviral medications can also be taken to reduce severity of the flu or shorten the amount of time you are sick. Talk to your health care provider for information on flu shots or medications.

Risk factors that may make someone more in danger:

Infant or young child, over the age of fifty, chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes, heart, kidney, or lung disease, pregnancy, weakened immune system from HIV/AIDS or another disease or condition.

Seek Medical Attention If: Your cold or flu lasts more than 10 days, there is severe pain or swelling in your face, forehead, or neck, you cough up green, yellow, or gray mucus or you cough up blood, you have shortness of breath, your temperature is above 102° F (39° C), you have an earache or drainage from your ear, you have hoarseness, sore throat, or cough that will not go away, you have wheezing or chest pain.

Hand Washing

One of the best ways to prevent catching the flu or a cold is to wash your hands properly.

Wash Your Hands Before: Eating or preparing food, putting in or taking out contact lenses, giving medicine or bandaging wounds.

Wash Your Hands After: Preparing foods, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands, going to the bathroom or changing diapers, touching garbage, dirty goods, or dirty clothing, touching someone who is sick, or touching cuts or wounds, touching animals or animal waste.

This free patient information from mdCurrent-India is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always see your doctor if you are ill or have questions about your health.

Your doctors contact information is available in the box below.

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