

You May Have a Cold:

Symptoms:

- Runny nose, red eyes, sneezing, sore throat, dry cough, headache, general body aches.
- Onset gradual, typically lasting 1-2 days.
- A cold usually lasts about 1-2 weeks.
- One symptom usually precedes the others, while coughing and sore throats may persist after others have disappeared.

Home Treatment:

- Drink plenty of liquids. Hot water, herbal tea or chicken soup will help relieve congestion.
- Use disposable tissues, not handkerchiefs, to reduce the spread of virus to others.
- If your nose is red, put a bit of petroleum jelly on the sore area.
- Use nasal decongestant sprays for only three days or less. Longer use may actually increase irritation.
- Stay at home if at all possible, to avoid exposing coworkers and strangers to your germs.

When to Contact Your Physician:

- Visit the ER if your symptoms are severe (difficulty breathing, severe pain, altered consciousness) or if you have significant chronic medical problems. However, please call your primary physician for routine care. Your physician knows you best and can provide the best continuity of care.
- If signs of pneumonia, bronchitis or upper respiratory complications develop: increased cough, difficulty breathing, high fever, ear pain, facial pain or chest pain.
- If symptoms persist beyond the typical duration of a cold.

You May Have the Flu :

Symptoms:

- Fever, lasting 3-4 days about 102-104 degrees.
- Headaches and general aches and pains are extremely common and often severe.
- A dry cough, runny nose and sore throat.
- Fatigue and weakness can last up to 2-3 weeks, periodically resulting in extreme exhaustion.

Home Treatment:

- Plug in a cool mist vaporizer or take a hot, steamy shower to return moisture to dry nasal passages, throat and lips.
- Use Tylenol or Ibuprofen as directed for fever or pain (never give aspirin to anyone under age 18).
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration drives your fever higher.
- Go to bed earlier than usual. This reduces stress and helps fight the infection.
- Stay at home if at all possible, to avoid exposing coworkers and strangers to your germs.

When to Contact Your Physician:

- Visit the ER if your symptoms are severe (difficulty breathing, severe pain, altered consciousness) or if you have significant chronic medical problems. However, please call your primary physician for routine care. Your physician knows you best and can provide the best continuity of care.
- If you are high risk (over the age of 65 or have a history of respiratory problems or chronic diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes).
- If you develop shortness of breath, painful, painful breathing or a sore throat.
- You seem to get better and then get worse.

How to Prevent a Cold & the Flu:

- Get an Influenza (flu shot every year, especially if you are over 65 years of age or have chronic health problems, such as heart disease, emphysema, asthma, kidney disease or diabetes. The Influenza (flu) vaccine is the best tool for preventing severe illness and death related to influenza among the elderly and chronically ill.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay at home when you are sick. Since Influenza (flu) can make some people really sick or kill them, everyone should stay at home when they are sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then throw away your used tissue.
- Wash your hands often to help protect you from germs.
- If soap and water isn't available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers to clean hands and faces.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth as much as possible.
- Get regular exercise, enough rest and eat healthy, balanced meals.
- Remember: You can give someone Influenza (flu) before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.