

Is it a Cold or the Flu? - Know the Difference

Signs & Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Onset	Gradual	Sudden
Fever	Rare	Usual; high (100.4°F to 102°F) is typical; lasts 3-4 days
Cough	Hacking; mild	Dry; can become severe
Headache	Rare	Common
Muscle / joint aches	Slight	Usual; often severe & sudden
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes, very mild	Usual; can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Usual; at the beginning of the illness
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usually	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort	Mild to moderate; hacking cough	Common
Treatment	Antihistamines Decongestants Advil® (ibuprofen) or Tylenol® (acetaminophen) or Aleve® (naproxen)	Advil® (ibuprofen) or Tylenol® (acetaminophen) or Aleve® (naproxen). Antivirals only as advised by provider.
Prevention	Wash your hands often with soap and water. Avoid close contact with anyone with a cold.	Vaccination. Wash your hands. Cover your cough. Stay at home if ill.
Complications	Sinus congestion, middle ear infection, asthma.	Bronchitis, pneumonia. Can worsen chronic conditions. Can be life-threatening. Complications more likely in those with chronic conditions and/or obesity, young children, and pregnant women.
For more information	www.rochester.edu/uhs (Check Care for Colds & Flu in "Health Topics.")	Centers for Disease Control www.cdc.gov/flu

University Health Service, University of Rochester
585-275-2662 / www.rochester.edu/uhs