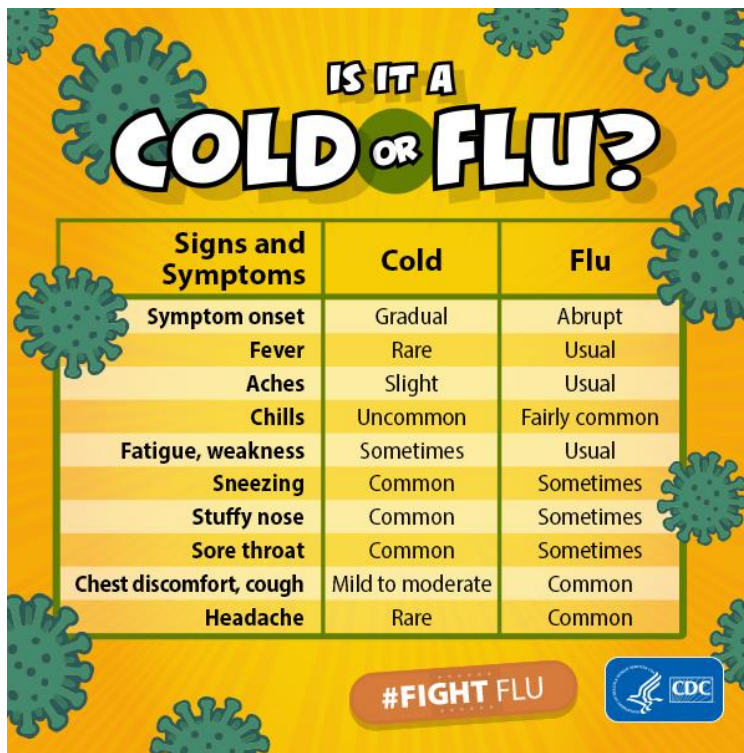


Common Cold and Influenza

Now back from the holidays and besides giving gifts and merriment, the other gifts that keep on giving are the Common Cold and Influenza.

When is it a cold and when is it influenza?

Flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more intense. Colds are usually milder than flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations. Special tests that usually must be done within the first few days of illness can tell if a person has the flu.



Signs and Symptoms	Cold	Flu
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt
Fever	Rare	Usual
Aches	Slight	Usual
Chills	Uncommon	Fairly common
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common
Headache	Rare	Common

Content source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases \(NCIRD\)](#)

The viruses can be transmitted from one person to another in respiratory secretions (i.e., saliva, nasal discharge, and phlegm). Infected droplets may be scattered through sneezing or coughing or they may land on surfaces touched by other persons, who then touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

The symptoms of a **common cold** appear as soon as 12-72 hours after exposure. The symptoms of **influenza** appear in 1-4 days after exposure, and typically last 2-3 days. While there is medication available, most health care providers suggest rest and plenty of fluids. To see if there is bacterial infection in addition to the viral infection, a healthcare provider should evaluate a child who has a high fever, persistent cough, or earache. Because of a possible association with Reye's Syndrome (i.e., vomiting, liver problems and coma), salicylate-containing products (i.e., aspirin) are not recommended for control of fever.

Spread Prevention

Influenza vaccine is the primary method of preventing influenza and its severe complications. The vaccine should be given annually beginning at 6 months of age. Two doses should be given the first year the child receives the influenza vaccine.

Annual influenza vaccination is *recommended* for all children aged 6 months through age 18 with priority given to the following persons for influenza vaccine if influenza vaccine supplies are limited:

- Children 6 months to 18 years
- Pregnant women
- Persons aged 50 years old and older
- Persons of any age with certain chronic medical conditions
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk

Additional ways to prevent the spread of these diseases:

- Get adequate rest, good nutrition, plenty of fluids
- Avoid people who are sick
- Observe children for symptoms of coughing, sneezing, headache, fatigue, fever. Notify parent to pick child up
- Remind children if they sneeze or cough into their hand or tissue, they must properly dispose of the tissue and wash their hands
 - Runny noses and eyes should be promptly wiped, then wash their hands
- Disposable tissues should be used. Keep tissues available
- Toys that children put in their mouths and frequently used surfaces (e.g., tables) should be washed and disinfected at least once each day
- The childcare facility should have fresh air and be aired out completely once a day, even in the winter months

Who should be excluded?

Children should be excluded if they have a fever or are unable to participate in general activities. Exclusion is of little benefit since viruses are likely to spread.

Content source: Disease Handbook for Childcare Providers REVISED –January 2018

For more information about Influenza (Flu) please visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

For more information about vaccines please visit:
<https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/ccproviders.htm> or call 603-271-4486.