



## A Publication of the Presbytery of West Virginia

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**Find a place to get  
your flu vaccine.**

**Go to**

<https://vaccinefinder.org/>

And enter your zipcode.

Influenza Updates:

- 2017-2018 was a high severity, H3N2-predominant season.
- Flu activity in the U.S. is low now, but expected to pick up in the Fall.

CDC on Flu Vaccine:

- CDC's vaccine recommendations for the 2018-2019 flu season are now available.
- CDC recommends yearly flu vaccination for people 6 months and older.
- Get vaccinated by the end of October.

## Should I be worried? Cold vs the Flu

When you wake up sneezing, coughing, and with that achy, feverish, can't move a muscle feeling, how do you know whether you have cold symptoms or the flu? It's important to know the difference between flu and cold symptoms. A cold is a milder respiratory illness than the flu. While cold symptoms can make you feel bad for a few days, flu symptoms can make you feel quite ill for a few days to weeks. The flu can also result in serious health problems such as pneumonia and hospitalizations.

# Cold or Flu?

| Cold                        | Symptom               | Flu (Influenza)                        |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Rare, Mild (less than 100°) | Fever                 | Almost Always High (Greater than 100°) |
| Rare                        | Headache              | Common                                 |
| Slight                      | General Aches & Pains | Usual/Often Severe                     |
| Gradual over a Few Days     | Onset                 | Rapid Onset                            |
| Common                      | Stuffy Nose           | Rare                                   |
| Common                      | Runny Nose            | Common                                 |
| Common                      | Sore Throat           | Sometimes                              |
| Mild to Moderate            | Cough                 | Common – Can be Severe (Dry)           |

### What are common cold symptoms?

Cold symptoms usually begin with a sore throat, which usually goes away after a day or two. Nasal symptoms, runny nose, and congestion follow, along with a cough by the fourth and fifth days. Fever is uncommon in adults, but a slight fever is possible.

### How long do cold symptoms last?

Cold symptoms usually last for about a week. During the first three days that you have cold symptoms, you are contagious. This means you can pass the cold to others, so stay home and get some much-needed rest. If cold symptoms do not seem to be improving after a

week, you may have a bacterial infection, which means you may need antibiotics. Sometimes you may mistake cold symptoms for allergic rhinitis (hay fever) or a sinus infection. If your cold symptoms do not seem to be getting better after a week, check with your doctor to see if you have developed an allergy or sinusitis.

### What are common flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms are usually more severe than cold symptoms and come on quickly. Symptoms of flu include sore throat, fever, headache, muscle aches and soreness, congestion, and cough. Swine flu in particular is also associated with vomiting and diarrhea.

Most flu symptoms gradually improve over two to five days, but it's not uncommon to feel run down for a week or more. A common complication of the flu is pneumonia, particularly in the young, elderly, or people with lung or heart problems. If you notice shortness of breath, let your doctor know. Another common sign of pneumonia is fever that comes back after having been gone for a day or two.

### Is it flu or cold symptoms?

Take your temperature, say many experts. Flu symptoms often mimic cold symptoms with nasal congestion, cough, aches, and malaise, but a common cold rarely has symptoms of fever above 101 degrees. With flu symptoms, you will probably have a fever initially, you will feel miserable. Body and muscle aches are also more common with the flu. Usually, the time of year will give you some sense of what you're dealing with. The standard flu season runs from fall to spring of the next year.

### When do I call the doctor with flu or cold symptoms?

If you already have flu or cold symptoms, it's important to call your doctor if you also have any of the following severe symptoms:

**Persistent fever:** A fever lasting more than three days can be a sign of another bacterial infection that should be treated.

**Painful swallowing:** Although a sore throat from a cold or flu can cause mild discomfort, severe pain could mean strep throat, which requires treatment by a doctor.

**Persistent coughing:** When a cough doesn't go away after two or three weeks, it could be bronchitis, which may need an antibiotic.

**Persistent congestion and headaches:** When colds and allergies cause congestion and blockage of sinus passages, they can lead to a sinus infection (sinusitis).

In some cases, you may need to get emergency medical attention right away. In adults, signs of a crisis include:

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Severe chest pain   | Severe headache     |
| Shortness of breath | Dizziness           |
| Confusion           | Persistent vomiting |

### Can I prevent flu or cold symptoms?

The most important prevention measure for colds and flu is frequent hand washing. Hand washing by rubbing the hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds helps to slough germs off the skin.

