



Is it a cold, flu or COVID-19?

Whether you're sneezing, coughing, or feeling achy, sometimes it's difficult to know what's causing your symptoms. Is it just a pesky cold? Or could it be something more serious?

With the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continuing to be a concern in our communities, sorting through symptoms can be even more confusing – and stressful. Here's what you need to know to help set your mind at ease and get back to feeling your best.

Catching a cold

Compared with the flu and COVID-19, the common cold often doesn't cause a fever and has milder symptoms:

- **Onset:** Symptoms tend to develop slowly.
- **Duration:** About seven to 10 days.
- **Symptoms:** Runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, coughing, slight body aches, headaches.
- **Care tips:** Stay hydrated and get plenty of rest. Taking over-the-counter (OTC) medicine can help manage your symptoms, too.

Fighting the flu

With similar symptoms ranging from mild to severe, it's easy to mistake the flu for COVID-19. And while both are caused by viruses, one of the tell-tale signs of the flu is that it tends to come on suddenly:

- **Onset:** Symptoms develop abruptly.
- **Duration:** Less than two weeks.
- **Symptoms:** Coughing, sore throat, headaches, muscle or body aches, fatigue, fever or chills, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children).
- **Care tips:** Stay at home, rest, drink a lot of fluids, and avoid interacting with other people. Your doctor may prescribe an antiviral medication to help reduce your symptoms.

Coping with coronavirus

Suspecting you have COVID-19 can be scary. And while there is cause for concern, remember that most cases are mild and don't require any special treatment:

- **Onset:** Symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure to the virus.
- **Duration:** One to two weeks (for most people).
- **Symptoms:** Coughing, fever, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headaches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
- **Care tips:** Contact your doctor right away if you think you have or were exposed to the coronavirus. For those with symptoms, stay home in a room or area away from other people. Rest and drink a lot of fluids. OTC medicines like acetaminophen may help you feel better, too.

IMPORTANT REMINDER! The best way to protect you and your family from the flu and COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. It's FREE! Not only do vaccines lessen the severity of symptoms if you do get a virus, it can help prevent the flu and COVID-19 as well. Talk with your doctor to make sure a flu shot is right for you.