



Be in the Know: Cold vs. Flu

From runny noses and sneezing to sore throats and headaches, cold and flu symptoms can overlap, making it hard to tell the difference. For some people (especially those with respiratory issues), the flu can lead to serious complications, so it's good to be able to tell them apart. Use the guidelines below to recognize the difference between a cold and the flu.

A cold can last from two days to two weeks, with most people feeling better within a week. Symptoms of the common cold usually begin two to three days after you get infected and can include:

- Cough
- Headache
- Trouble breathing through your nose
- Sore throat
- Sneezing
- Swelling of sinuses
- Tiredness

The flu usually comes on suddenly, although you can have the virus one to four days before feeling sick. Symptoms include:

- Cough
- Fatigue
- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children)

Indicators it's the flu and not a cold include: fever, extreme exhaustion and severe headaches or body aches. Usually a stuffy nose, sore throat and sneezing are good indicators it's a cold.

Staying Healthy

The easiest way to stay healthy this winter is to wash your hands often. It also helps to avoid close contact with people who are sick and to disinfect surfaces such as kitchen counters, door handles and kids' toys as often as possible. And it's not too late to get your flu shot. Learn more about the flu on [the CDC website](#).

Healthy Eyes

It's easy to forget about going to the eye doctor, especially if you're seeing well. Next month is National Save Your Vision Month and a good reminder to be proactive about your eye health. Adults, particularly those over the age of 40, should get regular eye exams to check for conditions such as [cataracts](#) and [glaucoma](#). Children should get their first eye exam at six months with a family doctor or pediatrician.

Five tips for good eye health:

- 1. Choose healthy foods:** Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, especially leafy greens (such as spinach and kale), and foods with vitamin C (for example, oranges and strawberries) and beta carotene (found in carrots, sweet potatoes and squash). Foods with omega-3s also are good for your eyes. You can find this fatty acid in cold-water fish like salmon and tuna.
- 2. Wear sunglasses:** Just as the sun can damage your skin, it also can damage your eyes. Pick sunglasses that block 100 percent of both [UVA and UVB rays](#).
- 3. Use protective gear:** Wear safety glasses or goggles to prevent injuries on the job or while playing sports.
- 4. Quit smoking:** Smoking may increase the likelihood of cataracts and other potentially serious eye issues.
- 5. Take a break:** Staring at a computer screen or other electronic devices for too long can strain your eyes. Take a break every 20 minutes and at least every two hours get up and walk around.

If you have concerns about your vision, talk with your doctor.

Know Where to Go When You Need Care

You likely know that you have options for receiving care: your doctor, virtual care, convenience care, urgent care, or in the most serious cases, emergency room (ER) care. However, knowing when it is appropriate to visit any of these may not always be clear. While urgent care or the ER may offer extended hours, the cost of these visits is considerably higher than a visit with your doctor. Getting the right care at the right place can save time and money.

To understand your treatment options, see the “[When and where to get care](#)” tip sheet or call Medica CallLink® nurse line. Nurses are available 24/7 to answer your questions and help you choose the best care*.

**If you are having symptoms of a heart attack or stroke, or think you are having a life-threatening emergency, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency services immediately.*

Did You Know?

By now you should have received a 1095 tax form in the mail from Medica. This form lists the type of health coverage you had, any dependents covered under your plan, and the months you and any dependents were covered by Medica during 2015. Please use this form to complete your federal tax return for 2015. If you have any questions, call the number on the back of your ID card. For specific tax information, contact your tax advisor or visit irs.gov.

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