

## Is It a Cold, the Flu, or Seasonal Allergies?

Seasonal allergies can make people sneeze and cough, have a stuffy or runny nose, and have swollen sinuses. But a cold or the flu can make people feel the same way. This list of symptoms can help determine whether it's seasonal allergies or a cold or the flu.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Airborne Allergy
<b>Fever</b>	Rare	Usual, high (100-102 °F), sometimes higher, especially in young children; lasts 3-4 days	Never
<b>Headache</b>	Uncommon	Common	Uncommon
<b>General Aches and Pains</b>	Slight	Usual; often severe	Never
<b>Fatigue/ Weakness</b>	Sometimes	Usual, can last up to 3 weeks	Sometimes
<b>Extreme Exhaustion</b>	Never	Usual, at the beginning of the illness	Never
<b>Stuffy or Runny Nose</b>	Common	Sometimes	Common
<b>Sneezing</b>	Usual	Sometimes	Usual
<b>Sore Throat</b>	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
<b>Cough</b>	Common	Common, can become severe	Sometimes
<b>Chest Discomfort</b>	Mild to moderate	Common	Rare, except for those with allergic asthma

**Tool**

Colds, the flu, and allergies can be treated and prevented differently. Different complications can also arise for each type of illness.

	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Flu</b>	<b>Airborne Allergy</b>
<b>Treatment</b>	<p>Get plenty of rest.            Stay hydrated. (Drink plenty of fluids.)            Decongestants.            Aspirin (ages 18 and up), acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for aches and pains</p>	<p>Get plenty of rest.            Stay hydrated.            Aspirin (ages 18 and up), acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for aches, pains, and fever            Antiviral medicines (see your doctor)</p>	<p>Avoid allergens (things that you're allergic to)            Antihistamines            Nasal steroids            Decongestants</p>

	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Flu</b>	<b>Airborne Allergy</b>
<b>Prevention</b>	<p>Wash your hands often.            Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold.</p>	<p>Get the flu vaccine each year.            Wash your hands often.            Avoid close contact with anyone who has the flu.</p>	<p>Avoid allergens, such as pollen, house dust mites, mold, pet dander, cockroaches.</p>

	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Flu</b>	<b>Airborne Allergy</b>
<b>Complications</b>	<p>Sinus infection            middle ear infection,            asthma</p>	<p>Bronchitis,            pneumonia; can be life-threatening</p>	<p>Sinus infection,            middle ear infection,            asthma</p>

Source: National Institutes of Health, *NIH News in Health*, <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/>