

Cold and Flu Time

This tip sheet accompanies the presentation “Cold and Flu Time.”

Germs Can Give You a Cold or the Flu

Germs make people sick. You can't see germs, but they are in the air and they are on the things you touch. You can catch a cold or flu from germs.

Germs get into the air when a sick person breathes out or sneezes. Germs get on the things that a sick person has touched. You can breathe in germs. You can touch things that have germs and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. **Soon you might have a cold or the flu too.**

Getting a Cold

You can get a cold any time. People get more colds in the fall and winter, when they stay inside a lot, and when they are worried or tired. Colds can last 2-4 weeks.

You may have a cold if you...

- Are sneezing or coughing
- Have a scratchy or sore throat
- Have a runny or stuffy nose
- Have watery eyes
- Feel tired

Getting the Flu

Many people get the flu each year. There are new flu shots every year. The flu may seem like a cold, but the flu is much worse! You will start to feel really sick within 3-6 hours.

You may have the flu if you...

- Have a fever
- Feel sore and aches all over
- Feel very tired
- Have a headache
- Are coughing
- Feel really cold

The flu is different from a cold

If you have the flu, you may **not**: sneeze, have a stuffy nose, or have a sore throat. It may be hard to tell whether it's a cold, the flu, or allergies.

How Can You Get Better if You Have a Cold or the Flu?

- Get lots of rest
- Stay home if you have a fever
- Drink a lot of water, clear soup, hot tea, and juice
- Eat healthy foods

- Don't drink alcohol
- Don't smoke and stay away from people who smoke
- Take a hot shower to help clear your nose

Call Your Doctor If:

- You have a high fever (over 101)
- You have a bad headache
- You have bad aches and pains in your body
- You have trouble breathing
- You breathe faster than usual
- You cough, but nothing comes up
- You are sick to your stomach, vomit, or have diarrhea

There are Ways to Prevent a Cold or Flu

Prevention means you can keep from getting sick.

- Get a flu shot (ask your doctor about it)
- **Wash your hands with soap (for at least 20 seconds):**
 - Before eating
 - After using the bathroom
 - If you've been near a sick person
 - If you cough or sneeze
- Get lots of rest
- Eat healthy foods
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze

What If You Are Around Someone with a Cold or Flu?

- Ask them to cover their faces if they need to cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands a lot
- If someone is sick, do not share their:
 - Towels
 - Food
 - Knives, forks, or spoons
 - Drinking glasses, cups, bowls or plates
- Try to stay away from sick people and encourage them to stay home and rest

More About Colds and Flu

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/coldflu.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fflu%2Fabout%2Fqa%2Fcoldflu.htm
- American Academy of Family Physicians:
<https://familydoctor.org/condition/colds-and-the-flu/>