### Is It a Cold or the Flu?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Usual; high (100°F to 102°F; occasionally higher, especially in young children); lasts 3 to 4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Aches, Pains</td>
<td>Slight</td>
<td>Usual; often severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue, Weakness</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Usual; can last up to 2 to 3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme Exhaustion</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Usual; at the beginning of the illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffy Nose</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Usual</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore Throat</td>
<td>Common</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest Discomfort, Cough</td>
<td>Mild to moderate; hacking cough</td>
<td>Common; can become severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Treatment

**Cold**
- Antihistamines
- Decongestant
- Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines

**Flu**
- Antiviral medicines—see your doctor

### Prevention

**Cold**
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with anyone with a cold

**Flu**
- Annual vaccination; antiviral medicines—see your doctor

### Complications

**Cold**
- Sinus congestion
- Middle ear infection
- Asthma

**Flu**
- Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life threatening

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National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

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