

IS IT A COLD OR THE FLU?

The common cold and the flu (or influenza) are both highly contagious viruses. Although the flu often causes symptoms making your child feel worse than those caused by the common cold, it can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference between the two. Use the symptom checker below to help guide your decision. Prevention tips and advice for symptom relief are also included to help put both you and your child at ease.

Symptom Checker*

Question	Flu (Influenza)	Common Cold
Was the onset of illness	<input type="checkbox"/> Sudden?	<input type="checkbox"/> Slow?
Does your child have a	<input type="checkbox"/> High Fever?	<input type="checkbox"/> No or Mild Fever?
Is your child's exhaustion	<input type="checkbox"/> Severe?	<input type="checkbox"/> Mild?
Is your child's head	<input type="checkbox"/> Achy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Headache-free?
Is your child's appetite	<input type="checkbox"/> Decreased?	<input type="checkbox"/> Normal?
Are your child's muscles	<input type="checkbox"/> Achy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Fine?
Does your child have	<input type="checkbox"/> Chills?	<input type="checkbox"/> No Chills?

Prevention

Although there is no guaranteed way to keep anyone from getting colds or the flu, these tips will help stop germs from spreading:

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Teach your child to cough and sneeze into their elbow or a tissue.
- Teach your child to not touch their eyes, nose or mouth.
- Wash doorknobs, toilet handles, countertops and toys with a disinfecting wipe or a cloth with soap and hot water regularly.
- Keep your child home from school/child care if he or she has a fever and/or other bothersome cold or flu symptoms. Your child should stay home at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone without the aid of fever-reducing medicines.
- Get immunized for flu. Flu season is considered to run October through May in the U.S., so getting immunized before the season arrives provides the best protection. It is best to immunize all family members, if possible, and those caring for your children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends everyone six months and older be immunized. Speak with your child's doctor regarding the type (nasal spray or intramuscular shot) and doses needed based on your child's age, health and vaccine history.

Symptom Relief

Because the common cold and flu are caused by viruses, not bacteria, antibiotics will not relieve symptoms or help the cold or flu clear up any faster. Although most cold or flu symptoms subside after a week or two, the best things you can do are to help make your child more comfortable and watch for worsening symptoms that may require a call into your child's doctor. Here are some ways to help relieve symptoms:

- Relieve nasal congestion with saline nose drops (which you can buy over the counter).
- Place a cool-mist humidifier in your child's room to increase air moisture.

- Allow for plenty of rest.
- Have your child drink a lot of non-caffeinated fluids such as water and juice.
- Provide relief of fever and aches with acetaminophen or ibuprofen, being sure to follow the recommended dosage for your child's age and/or weight and the time between repeated doses.
- Avoid over-the-counter cough, cold and flu medicines, as there is little evidence they actually work for children younger than six years of age and could in fact put your child at risk for life-threatening side effects.

When to call your child's doctor

If your child is three months or younger, call your child's doctor at the first sign of illness to see if they need to make an appointment. Older children with symptoms typically don't need to see their doctor unless their symptoms worsen or have any of the following:

- Nostrils widening with each breath, the skin above or below the ribs sucks in with each breath, or your child is breathing rapidly or having any difficulty breathing.
- Nasal congestion persisting more than 10-14 days.
- The cough just won't go away (lasting longer than 1 week).
- Temperature over 102 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Excessive sleepiness or crankiness.
- Ear pain.

It is important to take flu symptoms more seriously because the flu could lead to more severe health complications, especially in infants. If your child is showing any symptoms of the flu, put a call into your pediatrician. Your child's doctor may be able to provide antiviral medicine. These drugs can make the illness milder and can prevent serious flu-related complications such as pneumonia. Antiviral medications work best if your child gets them within the first 1-2 days of showing signs of the flu. Young children, under the age of 2 years old, and any child with a chronic illness, such as asthma, are more vulnerable to getting the flu and developing more serious complications.

*Adapted from Kids Health: http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/sick/flu_vs_cold.html

Healthy Recipe: Baked Apple Slices

2 oranges	3 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch slices
2 Tablespoons honey	5 Tablespoons raisins
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon	¼ cup chopped walnuts (omit if allergic)
¼ teaspoon ground cloves	¼ cup low-fat or Greek vanilla yogurt

Preheat oven to 375°. Grate the zest of one orange and set aside. Squeeze the juice from both oranges into a small bowl. Stir honey, cinnamon, cloves and half of the zest into the juice. Lay half the apple slices in a glass baking dish. Scatter the raisins and 2 Tablespoons of the walnuts (if using) on top. Pour on half the juice mixture and top with remaining apples and juice. Combine the remaining 2 Tablespoons of walnuts with the orange zest and scatter over the top. Cover lightly with foil and bake 30-45 minutes or until soft and bubbly. Serve warm or cold with a scoop of vanilla yogurt.

Healthy Activity: Leaf Maze

Have your children help you to rake a maze into fallen leaves in your yard. Let children race, skip, jump, etc. through the maze. Change it up by adding leaf piles within the maze they have to hop over or create a big pile at the end of the maze they can jump into.