Colds & Flu
Cold As Ice and The Boogie Woogie Flu

With all the medical advances we witness every day, it’s disappointing that we still haven’t figured out how to defeat the common cold and flu. The average American will suffer through two to four colds each year, and millions will also endure at least one bout of the flu. Each episode can represent a week or two of lost productivity and enjoyment.

Even though there is no cure, there are things you can do to reduce your chances of catching one of these nasty conditions. And if you do catch a cold or flu, there are self-care techniques you can employ to ease your misery and feel better fast.

Do I Have the Cold or the Flu?
Although they feel similar—and certainly horrible—cold and flu are very different illnesses. Check out the chart below for some of the key differences between colds and the flu.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fever</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>102-104°F, 2-4 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Headache</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>prominent, sudden onset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ General aches and pains</td>
<td>slight</td>
<td>usual, often severe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Fatigue or weakness</td>
<td>mild</td>
<td>can last 2-3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Extreme exhaustion</td>
<td>never</td>
<td>early and prominent</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</td>
<td>common, can become severe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When to Seek Care for a Cold or the Flu
The symptoms described here can be signs of

- If symptoms last more than 10 days.
- If pain or swelling over sinuses gets worse when bending over or moving the head, especially with a fever of 101°F or higher.
- If a cold is accompanied by trouble breathing or wheezing.
- If you experience swollen, painful neck glands or pain in the ears.
- A headache that persists during a cold or flu is a sign that you should see a healthcare provider.
- If you have a sore throat that is very red or has white spots.
- A cough with phlegm that is green, gray, or yellow means you may need to see a healthcare provider.
- Seek medical care if a temperature is higher than 102°F in a 3-month to 3-year-old child; over 104°F in a 3 to 64-year-old; or 102°F or higher in anyone age 65 or older.
Colds & Flu (continued)

+ If a foul smell comes from the throat, nose, or ears.

Treating the Cold or Flu at Home
Check out the following tips to feel better fast when you are battling a cold or flu.
+ Drink Fluids—drinking at least eight, 8 oz. glasses of fluid daily thin your mucus, helping it to flow. Hot drinks and soups are especially effective.
+ Humidify Your Environment—moisture helps. Use the shower, a humidifier, or breathe over a bowl of hot water.
+ Get Rest—going to work with a cold isn't necessarily going to make it worse, but keep in mind you are most contagious in the first 48 hours.
+ Cough and Blow—blow your nose gently and often, and cough as needed. You want to keep the phlegm moving, not suppress it.
+ Gargle—gargle three times daily with salt water to soothe your sore throat. Salt helps sterilize the bacteria in the back of your throat and promotes the healing of inflamed tissues. To make a salt solution, stir 1/2 teaspoon of salt in a glass of warm water and gargle for 30-60 seconds.
+ Don't Take Antibiotics—unless there's solid medical evidence that you have a secondary bacterial infection. If you are unsure, see your healthcare provider.
+ Take an Over-The-Counter (OTC) Remedy—take single-ingredient products like Sudafed or Robitussin only as needed and as directed. Make sure you read the label warnings and only take something if you really need it. Be careful about interactions between over-the-counter and prescribed medications.

Prevention
There's no question about it—the best way to deal with a cold or flu is to avoid it in the first place. By taking a few precautions, you can dramatically cut your chances of picking up one of these viruses. Here are some tips to consider.
+ Wash your hands thoroughly and often.
+ Avoid touching your eyes and nose between hand washings.
+ Get at least eight hours of sleep each night so your body isn't run down.
+ Avoid physical contact with sick people if possible.
+ Consider staying home during the first few days of a cold, when you're most contagious.
+ Wash your hands after contact with sick people.
+ Eat a healthy diet, including five servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
+ Use a humidifier during cold and flu season.
+ Consider getting a flu shot.

Take Test