

## **Do I have the flu or just another cold?**

During the cold and flu season, it can be difficult to determine which might be causing you to not feel well. The flu and the common cold share many symptoms which makes laboratory testing necessary for an accurate diagnosis.

### **Is it the flu or a cold?**

Signs and Symptoms	Flu	Common Cold
Symptom Onset	Abrupt	Gradual
Fever	Usually	Rare
Aches	Usually	Slight
Chills	Fairly Common	Uncommon
Fatigue/weakness	Usually	Sometimes
Sneezing	Sometimes	Common
Stuffy Nose	Sometimes	Common
Sore Throat	Sometimes	Common
Chest Discomfort or cough	Common	Mild to Moderate
Headache	Common	Rare

Once you are confirmed to have the flu, your doctor may prescribe an antiviral drug to help decrease the severity and duration of your symptoms. These drugs work best when they are started within 2 days of your symptoms.

### **Antiviral Treatment Options:**

- Oseltamivir phosphate (Tamiflu)
- Baloxavirmarboxil (Xofluza)

### **What can I do to treat the symptoms of the flu or common cold?**

- **For Fevers, Aches, and Pains:**
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
  - Naproxen (Aleve)
  - Drink plenty of water
- **For Runny Nose & Sneezing:**
  - Antihistamines
- **For Stuffy Nose:**
  - Oral or Nasal Decongestants
  - Saline nasal spray
  - Humidifiers
  - Vaporizer with Vicks VapoSteam
  - Breathe Right nasal Strips
- **For Sore Throat:**
  - Sore throat drops (Halls, Ricola, etc.)
- **For Cough:**
  - Dextromethorphan (Used to suppress coughs with no mucus)
  - Guaifenesin (Used to thin mucus so that it can be coughed up easier)
  - Cough drops (Halls, Ricola, etc.)

## **How Do I Know If I Have Strep Throat?**

Strep Throat is an illness that is caused by bacteria and is spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Strep Throat:**

Usually include:	Typically do not include:
Sore throat that starts quickly	Cough
Pain when swallowing	Runny nose
Fever	Hoarseness
Red and swollen tonsils (sometimes with white patches or streaks of pus)	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
Tiny red spots on the roof of the mouth	
Swollen lymph nodes in the front of the neck	

Pain and fever without a cough are the most common signs and symptoms of strep throat. However, other symptoms may include: headache, stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting – especially in children.

If you suspect that you have strep throat, a simple swab of your throat can be taken and tested for the bacteria. If positive, your doctor will prescribe you medication.

Since strep throat is caused by bacteria, antibiotics are the medication of choice to clear this infection. It is important that antibiotics are taken as prescribed and that all of the medication is taken even if you are starting to feel better. This ensures that your infection is completely cleared.

### **What can I do to treat the symptoms of strep throat?**

- **For Fever & Pain:**
  - Acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)
  - Naproxen (Aleve)
  - Drink plenty of water
- **For Sore Throat:**
  - Sore throat drops (Halls, Ricola, etc.)

### **General Infection Control Tips:**

- Wash hands often to prevent the spread of germs
- Stay at home if you are sick
- Cover your mouth & nose when coughing or sneezing
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.