



Is It Flu Or A Cold? Here's How To Tell

Flu symptoms often are confused with the common cold. Both illnesses cause sinus congestion, fatigue, sore throat, fever, chills, headaches and coughing. But the two viruses are considerably different.

Colds usually are confined to the nose and throat, whereas flu attacks the entire respiratory system. Colds may develop over a period of days, whereas flu has a more sudden onset, with most symptoms appearing within 24 hours of infection. The common cold sometimes brings a low fever, but the flu may cause a temperature greater than 100 degrees. Flu symptoms are generally more severe, with more pronounced fatigue and aches over the whole body.

Adhering to a few simple principles of infection control, both at work and at home, can greatly reduce your chances of contracting either one, according to the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Chicago.

The association has developed a checklist that outlines some of the steps you can take to keep yourself, your family members and coworkers healthy. A few general steps include:

- Have a physician evaluate any symptoms of respiratory or diarrheal illnesses. Practice proper infection control to avoid exposing others.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- If you think you have an acute infectious illness, see a physician. If you do have an infection, and your doctor tells you to stay home from work, do so. This will keep the infection from spreading to coworkers.
- Maintain cleanliness in kitchens and bathrooms at home. At work, report soiled surfaces in these areas to those responsible for building maintenance.

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