

COLD,

FLU OR

COVID-19?

The common cold, flu and COVID-19 are all caused by viruses that affect your respiratory system, and all three illnesses share some symptoms. This makes it difficult to know what you may be sick with when you're feeling under the weather.

Learn more about the similarities and differences between the three illnesses below.

Cold	Flu	COVID-19
Symptoms typically come on gradually.	Symptoms usually come on suddenly and vigorously, and are more severe than a cold.	Symptoms can appear two to 14 days following exposure to COVID-19.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common symptoms include: nasal congestion, sneezing and runny nose<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can also include cough, mild headache and minor body aches• Symptoms tend to last a week (you're generally contagious for first three days)• Doctor visit is unnecessary – over-the-counter medications are generally effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common symptoms include: high-grade fever, headache, body aches and fatigue<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can also include dry cough, sore throat and runny or stuffy nose• Symptoms generally improve within two to five days, but can last a week or more• You should stay home until 24 hours after fever is gone to avoid spreading the flu to others• Prescription antiviral drugs can help decrease the severity and length of symptoms• Complications can occur; call a doctor if you think your symptoms are worsening or if you have a condition such as asthma, diabetes or pregnancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Common symptoms include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, congestion and sore throat<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can also include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and new loss of taste or smell• Some may experience little to no symptoms, while others may require hospitalization• Even after recovering from COVID-19, you may experience lingering symptoms• Complications can occur; call a doctor if you think your symptoms are worsening or if you are at a higher risk for severe illness (e.g., elderly or immunocompromised)

Because there is some overlap between the symptoms, it may be difficult to determine whether you have the flu or COVID-19 without being tested. As such, if you believe you have the flu or COVID-19, please call your doctor and explain your symptoms *before* going to a facility to seek care.

