



Do I Have A Cold, Allergy, or the Flu?

Most people will not need to seek medical care, and their symptoms will resolve over time with plenty of fluids and rest.

Symptoms	Allergy	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Rare	Typical (>50%)
Headache	Rare	Rare	Typical
Muscle aches	Never	Sometimes	Often
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Typical up to 3 weeks
Stuffy/runny nose	Typical	Typical	Sometimes
Sneezing	Typical	Typical	Sometimes
Coughing	Sometimes, dry	Typical, "wet cough"	Typical, usually dry
Sore throat	Sometimes	Typical	Typical
Burning chest pain	Rare	Sometimes	Typical
Red, watery eyes	Sometimes	Rare	Typical
Diarrhea/vomiting	Rare	Never	Sometimes (<50%)
Onset	Often sudden	Gradual	Sudden
Duration	Over a week	3-5 days	5-10 days

Emergency Warning Signs

If you become ill and experience any of the following signs, seek emergency medical care.

Children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough