

Symptom Differences Between URI's (Cold) and Influenza(Flu)

Can you tell the difference between symptoms of flu and the common cold? To learn more about your symptoms, if they are associated with the flu, check out the Symptoms at a Glance chart below.

Symptom	Upper Respiratory Infection (Cold)	Influenza (Flu)
Fever	Fever is rare and if present it is low grade ≤ 100.5 with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100.5°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the flu.
Coughing	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
Aches	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
Stuffy Nose	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the flu.
Nasal Mucous Production	May cause lots of clear, light yellow or green mucous	Causes only slight runny nose , if any at all
Chills	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu experience chills.
Tiredness	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the flu.
Sneezing	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the flu.
Sudden Symptoms	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
Headache	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
Sore Throat	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat may present with the flu, but not as common as with a cold
Chest Discomfort	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the flu.
Vomiting and Diarrhea	Never	Rarely, and if present are mild and not the predominant symptoms