

#### Cold Versus Flu

### **Questions & Answers**

#### What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

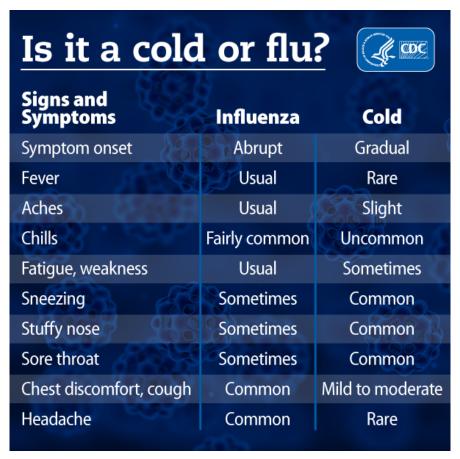
The flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations. Flu can have very serious associated complications.

### How can you tell the difference between a cold and the flu?

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Special tests that usually must be done within the first few days of illness can tell if a person has the flu.

## What are the symptoms of the flu versus the symptoms of a cold?

The <u>symptoms of flu</u> can include fever or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue (tiredness). Cold symptoms are usually milder than the symptoms of flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems.



#### **Get Email Updates**

To receive weekly email updates about Seasonal Flu, enter your email address:

# **Archived Flu Emails**

luenza Types	
asonal	
an	
ine/Variant	
ndemic	
ner	

Page last reviewed: January 30, 2018 Page last updated: January 30, 2018

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (http://www.cdc.gov/), National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD)

(http://www.cdc.gov/ncird/index.html)

Page maintained by: Office of the Associate Director for Communication, Digital Media Branch, Division of Public Affairs