

# Difference between cold and flu symptoms

Can you tell the difference between the symptoms of a common cold and seasonal flu? Some of the general differences are listed below. Know what to look for and how to help prevent the flu.

Symptom	Cold	Seasonal flu
<b>Fever</b>	Fever is <b>rare</b> with a cold.	Fever is <b>usually present</b> with the flu. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is typically associated with the flu.
<b>Coughing</b>	A hacking, <b>productive</b> (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A <b>non-productive</b> (non-mucus producing) cough is <b>commonly present</b> with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
<b>Aches</b>	<b>Slight</b> body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	<b>Moderate to severe</b> aches and pains are <b>common</b> with the flu.
<b>Stuffy nose</b>	Stuffy nose is <b>commonly present</b> with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is <b>sometimes</b> present with the flu.
<b>Chills</b>	Chills are <b>uncommon</b> with a cold.	Chills are <b>fairly common</b> with the flu.
<b>Tiredness</b>	Tiredness is fairly <b>mild</b> with a cold.	Tiredness is <b>moderate to severe</b> with the flu.
<b>Sneezing</b>	Sneezing is <b>commonly present</b> with a cold.	Sneezing is <b>sometimes</b> present with the flu.
<b>Sudden symptoms</b>	Cold symptoms tend to develop <b>over a few days</b> .	The flu typically has an <b>abrupt onset</b> , often within a few hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
<b>Headache</b>	A headache is fairly <b>rare</b> with a cold.	A headache is <b>very common</b> with the flu.
<b>Sore throat</b>	Sore throat is <b>commonly present</b> with a cold.	Sore throat is <b>sometimes</b> present with the flu.
<b>Chest Discomfort</b>	Chest discomfort is <b>mild to moderate</b> with a cold.	Chest discomfort is <b>common</b> and can be <b>severe</b> with the flu.



## Protect yourself against the flu

**1. Getting the seasonal flu vaccine is an important step to prevent flu viruses.**

Find a flu clinic near you at the vaccine provider search tool.

Visit [immunize.utah.gov/locate-a-clinic/](https://immunize.utah.gov/locate-a-clinic/)

**2. Avoid close contact.**

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

**3. Stay home when you are sick.**

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

**4. Cover your mouth and nose.**

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

**5. Clean your hands.**

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

**6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.**

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

**7. Practice other good health habits.**

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

**8. Take antiviral drugs only if your doctor prescribes them.**

Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications. These drugs must be taken within two days of symptoms.