

Is it a cold, the flu, allergies, or COVID?



When you get the sniffles, it can be hard to know whether it is a cold, the flu, allergies, or COVID. All have very similar symptoms, but each has its own key symptoms that sets it apart.

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Airborne allergy	COVID
Fever	Rare	Usual	Never	Usual
Headache	Uncommon	Common	Uncommon	Common
General aches, pains	Slight	Usual	Never	Common
Fatigue, weakness	Sometimes	Usual	Sometimes	Usual
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Usual	Never	Sometimes
Stuffy, runny nose	Common	Sometimes	Common	Common
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Usual	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Cough	Common	Common	Sometimes	Usual
Chest discomfort	Mild to moderate	Common	Rare, except with allergic asthma	Common

Treatment & prevention



Cold

Rest, stay hydrated, and treat symptoms with over-the-counter meds like decongestants, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen (aspirin for ages 18+). Prevent colds by washing your hands often and avoiding close contact with sick individuals.



Flu

Rest, stay hydrated, and manage symptoms with aspirin (18+), acetaminophen, or ibuprofen. Your provider may prescribe antivirals. Get a yearly flu shot, wash your hands often, and avoid close contact with those who are sick.



Allergies

Avoid allergens and ask your provider about antihistamines, nasal steroids, or decongestants. Common triggers include pollen, dust mites, mold, pet dander, and cockroaches.



COVID

Most COVID cases can be managed with rest, fluids, and supportive care, but high-risk individuals may need medication, so testing is important. Regular handwashing, avoiding sick contacts, and staying up to date on vaccines can help reduce your risk.



Marathon Health is not a walk-in health center. Please schedule an appointment before showing up to a health center near you.

Schedule your appointment
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