

What is the difference between

a **COLD** and the **FLU** ?

So what does that nagging cough mean?

When you start feeling sick, it may be hard to tell whether it is a cold or the flu. Both illnesses are respiratory infections; however, they are caused by different viruses. Colds are usually milder than the flu. When infected with a cold, a person can usually continue with daily activities. However, the flu can affect daily functioning and can result in serious health complications. The table below can assist in determining if your symptoms are more common to a cold or the flu.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU
Fever	Rare	High (102 – 104 F) Lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches, pains	Slight	Usual; Often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme exhaustion	Never	Early and prominent
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common; Can become severe

Adapted from U.S. FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/896flcht.html>

If you or a loved one has a cold or the flu, there are numerous actions that can be taken so that you can recover. It is important to remember that you should **not** take antibiotics for a cold or flu. Antibiotics do not work against cold or flu viruses and over usage may lead to antibiotic resistance in bacteria.

In order to feel better when you are sick, you should:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- Use a humidifier
- Use of non-prescription cough and cold medicine may help

If your symptoms get worse, last a long time, or lead to more serious problems such as shaking, chills, chest pains, or vomiting, you should immediately see a doctor. In the first few days of illness, a medical laboratory test can be ordered to determine if a person is infected with the flu.

Remember, getting a flu shot is the most effective way to prevent the flu. If you or loved one does get sick it is important to be aware of your symptoms and treat them accordingly.

References: www.cdc.gov , www.fda.gov