Colds and flu
Tips to treat a cold or the flu

Natural remedies
Some vitamins help with cold symptoms. Vitamin C is one of the best for helping you feel better. If you feel a cold coming on, drinking orange juice or taking vitamin C supplements could be helpful. But don't overdo it. Too much can cause stomach problems or cramps.

Gargling with warm water mixed with salt can soothe a sore throat.

Rest and relaxation
Sometimes, the best thing for a cold or the flu is to rest. Stay in bed. Drink plenty of clear liquids. Water, broth, or sports drinks can help keep you hydrated. If your cold or flu gets worse, call your doctor right away.

Pneumonia
Sometimes a bad cold or the flu can turn into pneumonia. Pneumonia can feel like the flu, but it can also cause:

- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Nausea and vomiting

Older adults are more likely to get pneumonia, but anyone can catch it. It can be caused by a virus—like the flu—but more often it is caused by a bacterial infection. Many people die from pneumonia every year.

Most of the time, pneumonia can be treated with antibiotics. A vaccine can help keep you from getting pneumonia. Talk with your doctor to find out more.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your doctor may recommend based on individual facts about you.

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Is it a cold or the flu?
Runny nose. Cough. Sore throat. You can tell you’re sick. But is it just a cold? Or is it something more?
The flu and the common cold share a lot of the same symptoms. But the flu is much more serious. That’s why it’s important to know which one you have. Check out this list of symptoms to help you figure it out.

Catching a cold or the flu
Winter and spring are cold and flu season. There are more than 200 viruses that can cause a cold. There are only a few viruses that cause flu. Some people are more likely to catch these viruses. They include:

- Older adults
- Very young children
- People who have asthma, heart disease, or other long-term conditions

Cold and flu prevention
The best treatment for any illness is prevention. Here are some ways to avoid getting a cold or the flu:

- **Wash your hands.** The very best thing you can do to stop cold and flu germs is to wash your hands. Use warm water and soap. Be sure to wash them for at least 20 seconds.

- **Avoid sick people.** Shaking hands with a sick person can give you a cold. So can touching the same doorknob. It may be hard to avoid everyone who is sick during cold and flu season. But keeping your distance can help keep you healthy.

- **Get a vaccine.** You can’t get a shot to prevent colds. But you can get a shot to help protect against the flu. MetroPlus covers the cost of flu shots for members. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urges that almost everyone older than 6 months get a vaccine every year. But talk with your doctor first.

Caring for yourself
There’s no cure for a cold or the flu. But these are things you can do to feel better:

**Over-the-counter medicine**
Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) and acetaminophen (Tylenol) can help reduce a fever. They also help with aches and pains. Be sure to check the label for the correct dose. And never give aspirin to children or young adults. It could cause a rare problem called Reye’s syndrome. This problem can be fatal.

Liquids like NyQuil and Robitussin often have several medicines in them. They can help with fever, chills, coughing, sneezing, and stuffy nose. Check the label to make sure you’re getting the right medicine for your symptoms.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Flu</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Yes (100° F to 102° F, lasting 3 to 4 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Rare</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling weak</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling very tired</td>
<td>No, but a little tired</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffy nose</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sneezing</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Yes (mild to moderate, hacking cough)</td>
<td>Yes (can be severe)</td>
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