

Cold versus Flu

What are the difference between a cold and the flu?

- The common cold and the flu are caused by viruses, which cannot be treated with antibiotics.
- The body's immune system must fight the virus on its own.
- Use the chart below to differentiate between a cold and the flu.

Symptom	Cold	Flu
Fever	Rare	Characteristic, High (102-104° F); lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Prominent
General aches and pains	Slight	Usual, often severe
Fatigue, weakness	Quite 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 Hacking cough	Common, can become severe

Are they contagious?

- Colds are transmitted by sneezing and coughing and are most communicable 24 hours before symptoms until two days after the start of the symptoms.
- The flu is transmitted in the same manner and is contagious as long as a fever is present.

When should I keep my child home versus sending him/her to school?

- **If your child has a fever of 100.0°F or greater he/she must remain at home until his/her temperature has been less than 99.0°F for 24 hours.**
- Even if your child does not have a fever, please keep him/her home if he/she is going to have a hard time actively participating in school. He/she may be experiencing tiredness, coughing, sneezing, lack of appetite, headache, sore throat, etc. Allow your child a day of rest at home.
- If the return to school is too soon, the body's immune system may be unable to fight off other infectious diseases.

What can I do to make my child feel better?

- Ensure that he/she gets plenty of rest. This may mean limited TV watching time so he/she can get restful sleep for periods of time during the day.
- Encourage fluids such as juice in case your child does not feel like eating much.
- Feed bland foods, such as rice, toast, plain pasta, soup, etc. so as to not upset the stomach.
- Remember that antibiotics will not help a cold or the flu! Tylenol or Motrin may be given for fever and/or body aches.