

# Colds versus Flu: How to Tell the Difference

Are you coming down with a cold? Do you have the flu?  
The table below shows some differences and similarities between colds and flu.

<b>Differences Between Colds and the Flu</b>	
<b>WITH A COLD:</b>	<b>WITH THE FLU:</b>
Symptoms are usually <b>less severe</b> than flu symptoms	Symptoms are usually <b>more severe</b> than cold symptoms
Symptoms develop <b>gradually</b> over a few days.	Symptoms come on <b>quickly</b> and severely.
You rarely have a fever.	You almost always have a <b>fever</b> .
You feel sick mostly in your head and nose.	Your <b>entire body</b> feels sick.
Body aches, headaches and pain are usually mild if you have them.	<b>Body aches, headaches and pain are common</b> and can be severe.
You may or may not feel tired and weak.	<b>Tiredness and weakness are common.</b>
There is no vaccine to protect you.	You can get vaccine (a shot or the nasal spray) to protect yourself.
There are no prescription medicines to treat colds.	There are prescription medicines to treat the flu.
<b>Similarities Between Colds and the Flu</b>	
<b>WITH A COLD:</b>	<b>WITH THE FLU:</b>
Caused by a virus.	Caused by a virus.
Affects the body's breathing system (nose, throat, windpipe and lungs).	Affects the body's breathing system (nose, throat, windpipe and lungs).
Usually goes away on its own.	Usually goes away on its own.
You should contact your doctor if symptoms change or get worse.	You should contact your doctor if symptoms change or get worse.