Coughing? Sneezing? Is it Allergies or a Cold?
By WebMD

It’s a question that puzzles lots of folks when those familiar symptoms hit: Is all that coughing and sneezing from a cold or hay fever?

What Are Colds and Allergies?
You get a cold when a virus gets into your body. There are hundreds of different types that can get you sick. Once a cold virus gets inside you, your immune system launches a counter-attack. It’s this response that brings on the classic symptoms like a cough or stuffed up nose.

The viruses that cause colds are contagious. You can pick them up when someone who’s infected sneezes, coughs, or shakes hands with you. After a couple of weeks, at the most, your immune system fights off the illness and you should stop having symptoms.

It’s a different story with allergies. They’re caused by an overactive immune system. For some reason, your body mistakes harmless things, such as dust or pollen, for germs and attacks them. When that happens, your body releases chemicals such as histamine, just as it does when fighting a cold. This can cause a swelling in the passageways of your nose, and you’ll start sneezing and coughing. Unlike colds, allergies aren’t contagious, though some people may inherit a tendency to get them.

Take stock of your symptoms and how long they last to help you decide what’s causing your trouble.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Allergy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Long It Lasts</td>
<td>3-14 days</td>
<td>Days to months -- as long as you’re in contact with the allergy trigger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When It Happens</td>
<td>Most often in the winter, but possible at any time</td>
<td>Any time of the year -- although the appearance of some allergy triggers are seasonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When It Starts</td>
<td>Symptoms take a few days to appear after infection with the virus</td>
<td>Symptoms can begin immediately after contact with allergy triggers</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Cold</th>
<th>Allergy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aches</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itchy, watery eyes</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runny or stuffy nose</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CDC, National Institutes of Health, WebMD

Did You Know...?

- Most grown-ups have two to four colds a year; children can easily get six to 10.
- A single cold virus can have 16 million offspring within the course of a day.
- While a person’s breath can travel 4.5 feet per second, droplets from a sneeze can at about 100 miles per hour.
- The droplets from a sneeze can spread for a distance of six feet.

September is Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

One in 3 children in the United States are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, we encourage your family to make healthy changes together.

- Get active outside: Walk around the neighborhood, go on a bike ride, or play basketball at the park.
- Limit screen time: Keep screen time (time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games) to 2 hours or less a day.
- Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.
- Talk to your kids about the importance of good nutrition.
- Be an example when shopping or ordering food. Remember, your kids practice what they see and hear.

For more information, go to: https://healthfinder.gov/NHO/SepAnnounce.aspx
Motion Medicine by the Editors of Women’s Health

The muscle groups of your two feet make up 25% of the body’s muscles. If you ignore the strength and function of the muscles in your feet, it is like eliminating upper-body exercises from your routine. Here are some exercises that will put bows on your toes!

Calf Stretch: Relieves foot and heel pain. To Do: Stand facing a wall. With heels down, slowly rotate the back knee from the 12 o’clock to 1 o’clock position; lean until you feel a gentle stretch in your upper calf. Hold 30 seconds; switch legs. To target your lower calf, bring your back foot in six inches, bend knees and repeat the stretch.

Caterpillar: Strengthens arches. To Do: Lie on your back with your feet flat on the floor, hip-distance apart and two feet from your butt. Lift both arches and draw your toes toward your heels. Then relax the arches and slide your heels toward your glutes and flatten your feet. Repeat the sequence until your heels nearly reach your glutes. Repeat in reverse: arches up, heels toward toes, toes spread forward as arches flatten. Continue until you’re where you started. That’s one set. Do three.

Windshield Wiper: Improves ankle stability, strengthens entire foot. To Do: Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor, hip-distance apart and two feet from your butt. Lift your toes so only your heels are on the floor and your feet are flexed. From heel to toe, slowly roll your feet to the ground and lift your heels until only your pointed toes are on the ground. That’s one set. Do three.

Wing & Sickle: Strengthens ankle, promotes correct gait. To Do: Lie on your back with your feet flat on the floor, hip-distance apart and two feet from your butt. Roll your feet onto their inside edges, keeping the insides of your big toes on the ground (your feet will resemble wings). Then roll your feet to their outer edges so the outsides of your pinkies and heels are on the floor. Repeat, slowly walking your feet away from each other until they’re two to three feet apart, then walk them back together. That’s one set. Do three.

Food for Thought

You can’t underestimate the importance of good nutrition when it comes to boosting your immune system. Vitamins, minerals and antioxidants are what keeps your body strong. Make these foods part of your diet for your best defense against colds and flu.

Fish: Oily fish—including salmon, tuna, and mackerel—are rich in omega-3 fatty acids that help reduce harmful inflammation in the body. Chronic inflammation prevents your immune system from working properly, and can contribute to colds and flu as well as more serious diseases.

Garlic: These pungent cloves do more than just flavor your food. Garlic also contains allicin, a sulfuric compound that produces potent antioxidants.

Anise seeds & Fennel: These licorice-flavored seeds, which have antibacterial properties, have been shown to ease coughing and help clear congestion from the upper respiratory tract.

Citrus fruits & Red Peppers: Both contain vitamin C. Research suggests that vitamin C may not prevent colds, but taking vitamin C at the first sign of illness may reduce a cold’s duration by about a day.

Tea: All tea—black, green, or white—contains a group of antioxidants known as catechins, which may have flu-fighting properties.

Mushrooms: Just about all mushrooms contain some form of immune-boosting antioxidants, along with potassium, B vitamins, and fiber.

Blueberries: These antioxidant powerhouses are bite-sized immunity boosters. Cornell University scientists found that wild blueberries contained the most active antioxidants of any fresh fruit, thanks to their high levels of anthocyanins—one of the most potent antioxidants.

Start preparing your immune system for the upcoming cold and flu season by simply adding a few additional ingredients into your diet today. For an extended listing of foods:

http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20631007,00.html

Wallet Wellness: DIY Hand Sanitizer

Cold and flu season is here. Don’t spend lots of money on expensive hand sanitizers that smell like the hospital. Here is a DIY recipe that includes ingredients that you may already have around the house. Make a big batch and hand them out to your family and friends and give to kids for their school lockers and backpacks.

Ingredients:
- 3 TB aloe vera
- 2 TB witch hazel or rubbing alcohol, if using alcohol reduce to 1 TB
- ½ tsp vitamin E oil
- 16 drops tea tree essential oil
- 8 drops lavender essential oil

Instructions

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl. To use the hand sanitizer store in a small jar or a squeeze tube.

Note: This recipe will make 2 fl oz and has a shelf life of 12 months.

Source: http://livesimply.me/2014/09/17/diy-hand-sanitizer/
Emotional Wellness: 7 Steps to End Chronic Worrying, By WebMD

Are you a worry wart? A nervous Nelly? Here are some tips to reduce or end chronic worrying:

1. Make a list of your worries. Identify what you are worried about.
2. Analyze the list. Look at whether your worry is productive or unproductive. A productive worry is one that you can do something about right now.
3. Embrace uncertainty. Once you have isolated your unproductive worries, it's time to identify what you need to accept in order to get over them. You may need to accept your own limitations or it may be a degree of uncertainty that you need to accept.
4. Bore yourself calm. Repeat a feared thought over and over and it will become boring and will go away.
5. Make yourself uncomfortable. Worriers tend to avoid new things and situations that make them uncomfortable. The worry helps them avoid discomfort, but if you force yourself to do the very things that make you uncomfortable, you will rely less on worry as a coping strategy.
6. Stop the clock. Worried people often have a sense of urgency. Rather than focus on the sense of urgency, instead focus on what you observe right now.
7. Remember that it's never as bad as you think it will be. Anxiety or worry is all about anticipation. The 'what ifs' are always way worse than how you feel when something actually happens.


In The Know: Cold & Flu Season By Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

New Flu Information from the CDC for 2016-2017 says getting an annual flu vaccine is the first and best way to protect yourself and your family from the flu. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors’ visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. A few things are new this season:

- Only injectable flu shots are recommended for use this season.
- Flu vaccines have been updated to better match circulating viruses.
- There will be some new vaccines on the market this season.
- The recommendations for vaccination of people with egg allergies have changed.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every year by the end of October, if possible. However, getting vaccinated later is OK. Vaccination should continue throughout the flu season, even in January or later. Some children who have received flu vaccine previously and children, who have only received one dose in their lifetime, may need two doses of flu vaccine. A health care provider can advise on how many doses a child should get.

It’s not possible to predict what this flu season will be like. While flu spreads every year, the timing, severity, and length of the season varies from one year to another. In the United States, flu viruses are most common during the fall and winter months. Influenza activity often begins to increase in October and November. Most of the time flu activity peaks between December and March and can last as late as May. In addition to getting a seasonal flu vaccine, you can take everyday preventive actions like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm

Clip & Cook: Old Fashioned Chicken Soup http://www.cookinglight.com/food/recipe-finder/chicken-soup-recipes

Just in time for cold and flu season, feeding a cold or a crowd, just got better!

Ingredients:

- 8 cups Chicken Stock or fat-free, lower-sodium chicken broth
- 2 (4-ounce) skinless, bone-in chicken thighs
- 1 (12-ounce) skinless, bone-in chicken breast half
- 2 cups diagonally sliced carrot
- 2 cups diagonally sliced celery
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 6 ounces uncooked medium egg noodles
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Celery leaves (optional)

Directions:

1. Combine the first 3 ingredients in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer 20 minutes. Remove chicken from pan; let stand for 10 minutes. Remove chicken from bones; shred meat into bite-sized pieces. Discard bones.
2. Add carrot, celery, and onion to pan; cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add noodles, and simmer 6 minutes. Add chicken, salt, and black pepper; cook for 2 minutes or until noodles are done. Garnish with celery leaves, if desired.

You may also prepare this in your crock pot, letting it slow cook all day. What a wonderful aroma when you open your front door!

Make this a little spicy by adding red pepper flakes or a couple slices of jalapeno peppers.