

Safety Fact Sheet



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

IS IT FLU OR A COLD? HOW TO TELL

Flu symptoms often are confused with the common cold. Both illnesses cause sinus congestion, fatigue, sore throat, fever, chills, headaches and coughing. But the two viruses are considerably different.

The Common Cold

Symptoms of the common cold usually begin two to three days after infection and often include

- Mucus buildup in your nose
- Difficulty breathing through your nose
- Swelling of your sinuses
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Cough
- Headache

Fever is usually slight but can climb to 102 degrees Fahrenheit in infants and young children. Cold symptoms can last from two to 14 days, but like most people, you'll probably recover in a week. If symptoms occur often or last much longer than two weeks, you might have an allergy rather than a cold.

Colds can occasionally lead to bacterial infections of your middle ear or sinuses, requiring treatment with antibiotics. High fever, significantly swollen glands, severe sinus pain, and a cough that produces mucus, may indicate a complication or more serious illness requiring a visit to your health care provider.

The Flu

If you get infected by the flu virus, you will usually feel symptoms one to four days later. You can spread the flu to others before your symptoms start and for another three to four days after your symptoms appear. The symptoms start very quickly and may include

- Body aches
- Chills
- Dry cough
- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose

Typically, the fever begins to decline on the second or third day of the illness. The flu almost never causes symptoms in the stomach and intestines. The illness that some call "stomach flu" is not influenza.

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There are several ways you can keep yourself from getting a cold or passing one on to others.

- Because cold germs on your hands can easily enter through your eyes and nose, keep your hands away from those areas of your body
- If possible, avoid being close to people who have colds. If needed stay home from work or school
- If you have a cold, avoid being close to people
- If you sneeze or cough, cover your nose or mouth

Hand Washing

Hand washing with soap and water is the simplest and one of the most effective ways to keep from getting colds or giving them to others. During cold season, you should wash your hands often and teach your children to do the same. When water isn't available, CDC recommends using alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

Disinfecting

Rhinoviruses can live up to three hours on your skin. They also can survive up to three hours on objects such as telephones and stair railings. Cleaning environmental surfaces with a virus-killing disinfectant might help prevent spread of infection.

Vaccine

There are many different flu viruses that affect the human race. Unfortunately, each flu vaccine can only protect against three or four viruses. Though three or four flu strains may not seem very impactful, scientists select the most rampant strains that are seen throughout the world for the seasonal flu vaccine. Remember to speak with your doctor if you have any allergies or questions regarding the flu vaccine.