

Health Post



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Cold, Flu, or Allergy? Know the Difference for Best Treatment

You're feeling pretty lousy. You've got sniffles, sneezing, and a sore throat. Is it a cold, flu, or allergies? It can be hard to tell them apart because they share so many symptoms. But understanding the differences will help you choose the best treatment.

"If you know what you have, you won't take medications that you don't need, that aren't effective, or that might even make your symptoms worse," says NIH's Dr. Teresa Hauguel, an expert on infectious diseases that affect breathing.

Cold, flu, and allergy all affect your respiratory system, which can make it hard to breathe. Each condition has key symptoms that set them apart.

Colds and flu are caused by different viruses. "As a rule of thumb, the symptoms associated with the flu are more severe," says Hauguel. Both illnesses can lead to a runny, stuffy nose; congestion; cough; and sore throat. But the flu can also cause high fever that lasts for 3-4 days, along with a headache, fatigue, and general aches and pain. These symptoms are less common when you have a cold.

"Allergies are a little different, because they aren't caused by a virus," Hauguel explains. "Instead, it's your body's immune system reacting to a trigger, or allergen, which is something you're allergic to." If you have allergies and breathe in things like pollen or pet dander, the immune cells in your nose and airways may overreact to these harmless substances. Your delicate respiratory tissues may then swell, and your nose may become stuffed up or runny.

Cold, Flu, or Allergy?

Treatment depends on which you have. A health professional can help you choose the best therapy.

Common Cold

- Symptoms last up to 2 weeks
- Stuffy, runny nose; sore throat; cough
- Treated with rest, fluids, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines to ease symptoms

Seasonal Flu

- Symptoms usually last 1-2 weeks
- High fever (100-102 °F, or higher in youngsters), headache, aches and pains, weakness, exhaustion, cough, chest discomfort
- Treated with rest, fluids, OTC medicines, prescription antiviral drugs

Airborne Allergy

- Lasts as long as allergens (such as pollen, pet dander) are present
- Stuffy, runny nose; itchy, watery eyes
- Treated with antihistamines, decongestants, nasal steroids

“Allergies can also cause itchy, watery eyes, which you don’t normally have with a cold or flu,” Hauguel adds.

Allergy symptoms usually last as long as you’re exposed to the allergen, which may be about 6 weeks during pollen seasons in the spring, summer, or fall. Colds and flu rarely last beyond 2 weeks.

Most people with a cold or flu recover on their own without medical care. But check with a health care provider if symptoms last beyond 10 days or if symptoms aren’t relieved by over-the-counter medicines.

To treat colds or flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. If you have the flu, pain relievers such as aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen can reduce fever or aches. Allergies can be treated with antihistamines or

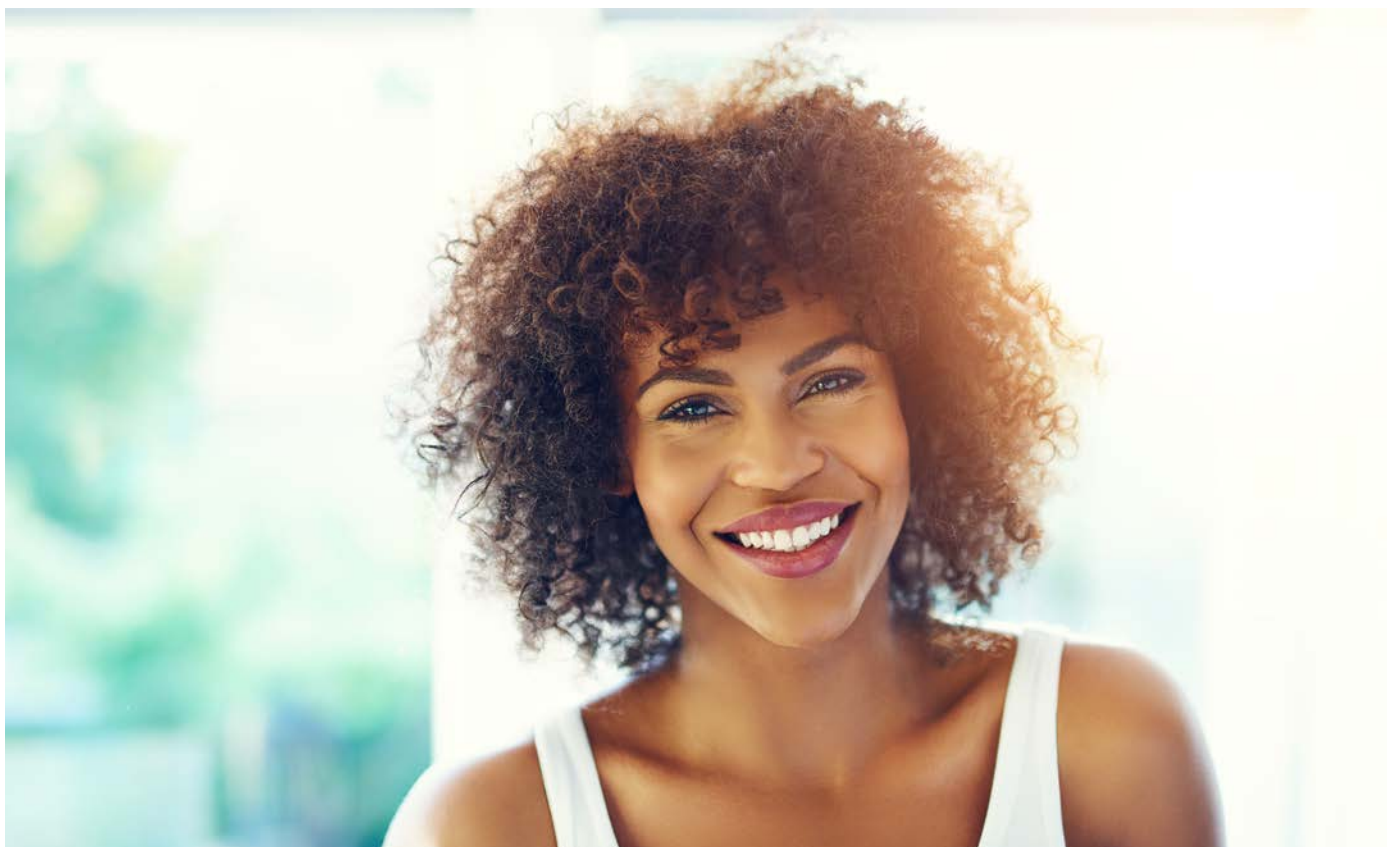
decongestants.

Be careful to avoid “drug overlap” when taking medicines that list 2 or more active ingredients on the label. For example, if you take 2 different drugs that contain acetaminophen—one for a stuffy nose and the other for headache—you may be getting too much acetaminophen.

“Read medicine labels carefully—the warnings, side effects, dosages. If you have questions, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, especially if you have children who are sick,” Hauguel says. “You don’t want to overmedicate, and you don’t want to risk taking a medication that may interact with another.”

Reprinted from <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov>

Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Airborne Allergy
Fever	Rare	Usual, high (100-102 F), sometimes higher, especially in young children; lasts 3-4 days	Never
Headache	Uncommon	Common	Uncommon
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual; often severe	Never
Fatigue, Weakness	Sometimes	Usual, can last up to 3 weeks	Sometimes
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Usual, at the beginning of the illness	Never
Stuffy, Runny Nose	Common	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Usual
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Cough	Common	Common, can become severe	Sometimes
Chest Discomfort	Mild to moderate	Common	Rare, except for those with allergic asthma
Treatment	Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, decongestants. Aspirin (ages 18 and up), acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for aches and pains	Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated. Aspirin (ages 18 and up), acetaminophen or ibuprofen for aches, pains, and fever. Antiviral medicines (see your doctor)	Avoid allergens (things that you’re allergic to), antihistamines, nasal steroids, decongestants
Prevention	Wash your hands often. Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold.	Get the flu vaccine each year. Wash your hands often. Avoid close contact with anyone who has the flu.	Avoid allergens, such as pollen, house dust mites, mold, pet dander, cockroaches
Complications	Sinus infection, middle ear infection, asthma	Bronchitis, pneumonia; can be life-threatening	Sinus infection, middle ear infection, asthma



Shake it Off - Boosting Your Mood

Have you ever had a bad mood you just couldn't shake? Everyone feels grouchy or irritable some days. But a bad mood or major mood swings that go on too long may signal a bigger problem. The good news is that certain healthy habits can help you boost your mood.

"Some people are more moody than other people. Normal mood actually varies from person to person," explains Dr. Carlos Zarate, chief of NIH's mood disorders group.

That's because we all have different "temperaments," or combinations of personality traits that are biologically based. These are fairly stable over time.

"Considerable research shows that people really differ in their basic temperament," says Dr. Maria Kovacs, an NIH-funded psychologist at the University of Pittsburgh. "There are some people who temperamentally are always in a 'good' mood. And there are people who are temperamentally always in a 'bad' mood."

For example, Zarate says, some people don't seem to be fazed no matter what happens. Others worry

about minor things and tend to overblow them. People who have a more negative temperament tend to have a higher risk for mood and anxiety disorders.

Changing Moods

It's not only temperament that affects how you feel each day. Daily habits that affect your ability to manage stress—like diet, exercise, sleep, or how much alcohol you drink—play an important role, too.

"If you address those factors—have good diet, good exercise, good sleep-wake habits, regular activities, routines, and try to disconnect from work and other stressors—those do have beneficial effects on mood and keeping you healthy," Zarate says.

Other biological factors can affect your mood too, like hormones. Women may experience shifts in hormones during their menstrual cycles, pregnancy, and menopause that cause mood changes. Men can have decreases in testosterone as they age, which has been linked to depression.

Certain medical conditions, such as a vitamin deficiency, can make you feel “down” or lack energy. Mental health conditions like depression and bipolar disorder can also cause you to feel very sad and have low energy.

Other mental health conditions can cause mood issues as well—for example, anxiety disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder, and personality disorders.

It’s okay once in a while for people not to have a good mood, Zarate explains. “Moods that fluctuate occasionally are a normal thing. It’s when it’s combined with other symptoms—like significant distress and/or impairment of function or relationships—that it becomes an issue.”

People may not know when their mood has become a problem. “Friends and family members should be open and honest with each other and let them know what they’re seeing,” he says, “because it can lead to strain on family relationships, other relationships, or work issues.”

Bouncing Back

“Mood is a normal part of life, and having emotions is a normal part of life,” Kovacs says. “Sometimes you feel more negative than other times. That’s not necessarily bad.”

Kovacs studies the strategies people use to repair their mood when feeling down. Her team and others have shown that what you do when feeling down can boost your mood or spiral you into feeling worse.

“One of the most common strategies that both children and adults use is what I call ‘attention refocusing,’” she explains. “Meaning that they stop paying attention to whatever is making them miserable or unhappy and they start putting their attention elsewhere.”

For kids, this may mean finding a specific task to do when they’re upset, like helping a parent with chores or finding someone to play with. For adults, it may mean having a conversation with a friend or going for a walk or to see a movie.

Kovacs has found that people with depression or other mental health conditions tend to turn to coping strategies that worsen their mood rather than lift it. For example, thinking about what’s bothering them over and over again or avoiding or hiding their feelings. These strategies can make negative feelings stronger or last longer.

Her research has shown that people often use the same strategies that their parents or older siblings

use. It can be hard to change the strategies to manage emotions because people are not always aware of them. For those with mood problems, talking with a mental health professional can help to identify negative patterns and choose healthier coping skills.

“If you come from a family that has a history of depression, it’s incredibly important to try to create an environment for yourself that can maximize the likelihood that you’re not going to get into a depression,” Kovacs says. That means avoiding things that can trigger depression or anxiety, like not getting enough sleep or exercise.

Keeping Track

Charting your moods can help you figure out what’s affecting how you feel. There are even apps that help.

Dr. David C. Mohr, who studies technology-based mental health interventions at Northwestern University, has found that people want to do more than just track their moods using apps. They want to see how their activities and moods are related, to help them take action to feel better.

“That sounds like a simple task, but it’s difficult to do in a way—and provide information back in a way—that’s understandable and reliable,” Mohr explains. “That’s one of the directions we’re working on right now.”

Mohr’s team is developing ways to teach coping skills and deliver mental health services remotely. They’ve designed a set of apps called IntelliCare that give strategies for improving mental health. They also created a “hub” app, IntelliCare Hub, that recommends which of the apps to try based on how you’re feeling.

The team tested whether using the hub app could improve symptoms of depression and anxiety in over 90 people. The participants used the app for eight weeks and had a coach who texted them a few times a week to check in.

“What we see is that we get significant drops in depression and anxiety, similar to what you’d see in psychotherapy or medications,” Mohr says. But more studies are needed to understand the effects of mental health apps like these.

If your mood is making it hard to cope with daily life, talk with your health care provider. If you’re having suicidal thoughts, call your doctor immediately or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK.

Article reprinted from <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov>

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Peoples Benefit Alliance will be held at 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri, on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting of any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY
Peoples Benefit Alliance
May 16, 2019 Annual Meeting of Members
THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF
PEOPLES BENEFIT ALLIANCE

The undersigned member of Peoples Benefit Alliance does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Peoples Benefit Alliance, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Peoples Benefit Alliance and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Jay Delsing and John Perles
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2019.

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 16476 Wild Horse Creek Road, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

Chesterfield, Missouri
April 15, 2019

Hypnosis for Health

Can Trances Work?

Have you seen someone get hypnotized? They may have been put in a trance and told to do silly things. But hypnosis can be used for more than just show. It's also being studied to treat certain health conditions.

Medical hypnosis aims to improve health and wellness. It can help relax and focus your mind—and make you more open to new ideas.

The technique usually has two parts. First, the health care provider gets your attention by inviting you to focus on something, such as an object or breathing. When you focus like this, your brain becomes more open to suggestion.

"Focusing makes the brain more flexible," explains Dr. Mark P. Jensen, a pain expert at the University of Washington who researches hypnosis.

Then the health care provider can offer a helpful suggestion. For example, if your goal is to manage pain, the provider may suggest that you feel greater comfort. Or they may suggest that you focus on being able to handle the pain more easily.

"Hypnosis takes advantage of the fact that people are able to be open to absorbing new ideas," Jensen says. "You get someone's attention and then you offer them a new way of looking at a problem that will make the problem easier for them to manage."

In addition to pain, studies suggest that hypnosis may help manage irritable bowel syndrome and post-traumatic stress disorder. Researchers are also studying hypnosis for mood disorders.

"There's emerging evidence that it's useful for helping people to manage depression and anxiety, including anxiety around medical procedures and surgery," Jensen says.

Some people respond to hypnosis more easily than others. It's also more effective if you want to be hypnotized. Hypnosis is not mind control by another person.

"We're all open to new ideas at some level," he says. "With people who have more hypnotic talent, it just takes fewer sessions. But everybody can respond at some level to hypnosis."

Imaging studies are shedding light on what happens in the brain during hypnosis. "Hypnosis is a particularly powerful technique for changing brain activity," Jensen says.

Researchers have found that different hypnotic suggestions can affect different parts of the brain. Pain involves both sensation and emotion.

A hypnotic suggestion for greater comfort changes the brain activity in the areas that process the intensity of the sensations.

"If I make the suggestion that these sensations don't bother you anymore, then the part of the brain that processes how upset you are by pain decreases in activity," Jensen says. "But the part of the brain that processes intensity of sensation doesn't necessarily change."

The way a drug treats pain is different. If you take an opioid to relieve pain, your whole brain can be affected, including the parts that process sensation. The pain may go away, but there can be side effects. These may include constipation, breathing problems, and even addiction.

More studies are needed to fully evaluate the potential benefits of hypnosis and how it might work. We do know hypnosis doesn't work for everyone. "There are some people—very few—that it only helps a little," Jensen says. "There are others whose lives can be completely turned around for the better with hypnotic treatments. Most people are somewhere in between."

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Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.

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