

Respiratory Illness (the Flu) Prevention

There are things we can do to help prevent the spread of all respiratory illness this season. These include:

- Stay home if you feel unwell and try to avoid spending time with people at higher risk of serious illness
- Practice respiratory etiquette: wear a mask in indoor public spaces, cough and sneeze in your elbow.
- Clean your hands regularly and avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Postpone your hospital visit to a patient or resident and consider a phone call instead

Is it a Cold or the Flu?

The common cold typically lasts between seven to 10 days, and common cold treatments are often nothing more than rest and over-the-counter symptom management medications.

Simple signs of a Cold

- Loss of appetite
- Sore Throat
- Sneezing
- Cough
- Vomiting

Simple signs of the Flu

- Muscle pain
- High Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Chills

When treatments for the common cold aren't working and you or a loved one is experiencing flu-like symptoms, here are some reasons when your common cold symptoms could be a sign of something worse, and when you should think about heading to the ER.

When to go to the ER

Fever and cold symptoms can turn into influenza symptoms if you aren't feeling any better as the days progress, or if the symptoms quickly escalate. In addition to typical common cold symptoms (fatigue, chills, body aches, etc.), high fevers in adults are usually a good indicator of a viral cold or potential flu.

Adults with a sustained fever of more than 102 degrees, as well as any combination of the below flu-like symptoms, should seek medical attention:

- Difficulty breathing
- Severe chest or stomach pain
- Vertigo and light headedness
- Severe vomiting
- Dehydration

Getting better before getting worse

Another important sign that can help you or a loved one determine if you need to visit the ER is when treatment for severe colds may make you feel better initially, but flu-like symptoms return. If your fever broke and returned after a few days, chest pain starts to come back or you are unable to hold down food after you've been able to eat normally, it might be a sign that stronger influenza treatment is necessary.

If at any point you or a loved one also is experiencing any symptoms of severe dehydration, including extreme thirst, confusion, dark-colored urine and dizziness, seek medical treatment immediately.

We're here for emergencies

You know your body better than anyone else. If your fever and cold symptoms just aren't going away, and you're concerned it might be the flu, we're here to help.

If you ever feel like you are not physically well enough to go to the ER, or if doing so would put yourself or others in danger, please call 911.