



# Nurse Notes

Southwest ISD Health Services Department



## Is It A Cold Or The Flu?

What is the difference between a cold and the flu?

The flu and the common cold are both respiratory illnesses but they are caused by different viruses. Because these two types of illnesses have similar flu-like symptoms, it can be difficult to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. In general, the flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. Colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

How can you tell the difference between a cold and the flu?

Because colds and flu share many symptoms, it can be difficult (or even impossible) to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Special tests that usually must be done within the first few days of illness can be carried out, when needed to tell if a person has the flu.

What are the symptoms of the flu versus the symptoms of a cold?

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<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/coldflu.htm>

**“WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF FROM THE FLU?”**

- 1 Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- 2 Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- 3 Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- 4 Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- 5 Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- 6 Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Stay home if you are sick.

Cold	Flu
Symptoms Gradually Developed	Symptoms Suddenly Developed
Mild/No Fever	High Fever
No Chills	Chills
Normal Appetite	Decreased Appetite
No Headache	Headache
No Achy Muscles	Achy Muscles

