

Is It a Cold or Flu? Here's How to Tell

- Certain symptoms -- runny nose, congestion, sneezing, minor body aches and fever -- are common to both maladies. But your alarm should go off when you start experiencing **high fever and chills** -- that's most probably the flu. High fever is typically thought of in this context as **101 degrees or above**, but lower fevers can sometimes occur in otherwise severe flu.
- The common cold can **come on slowly** -- sore throat, sneezing, cough, fever -- while the **flu is rapid in onset**.
The onset of flu is also often accompanied by **severe body aches, weakness** and sometimes **skin sensitivity**
- If it is influenza, the standard advice applies: It's important to **take fever-reducing medications**, **stay at home and away from other family members** as best possible, **rest**, and **most importantly – hydrate (water or broth)**
 - Chicken soup, can work wonders: chicken soup can **inhibit mucus production** that will **help alleviate a runny nose and cough**.
 - Medicines may help shorten the ordeal. The flu can be treated with Tamiflu if started within 48 hours of presentation, while **zinc supplements may help ease the common cold**
- Your **best defense against colds and flu?** **Hand washing** is key: Flu travels via droplets in the air, but also can live on surfaces for up to 24 hours. Think of all of the door knobs and handles you grab and hands you shake each day. It is recommended to washing your hands every one to two hours during this season.