



Is it the Cold or the Flu?

When you wake up sneezing, coughing, with a fever and that achy, can't-move-a-muscle feeling, how do you know whether you have a cold or the flu? While both can knock you off your feet, the flu can be far more serious than a cold and shouldn't be taken lightly. It's important to know the difference between the two so you can get the right treatment and start feeling better FAST! When you start feeling any of these nasty symptoms, come to MainStreet Family Urgent Care and Walk-In Clinic in (Centre/Arab – Located just across from WalMart on Highway 411!/Located in the WalMart shopping center on Highway 231!)

Cold and Flu Overview

A cold is a milder respiratory illness compared to the flu. While cold symptoms can make you feel bad for a few days, flu symptoms can take you out of the game for up to a week or two. The flu can also lead to serious health problems such as pneumonia and hospitalizations. While most people associate the sneezy, sniffly cold with wintertime, you can actually get a cold during any season. On the other hand, flu season typically runs from November through March, although you and your family are at risk as early as October and as late as May.

What are the Symptoms?

The common cold and the flu share a lot of the same symptoms such as a runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, coughing and sore throat. You may even experience fever, headaches or body aches with both, however unlike the flu, these symptoms paired with a cold are usually mild in nature. The flu is often characterized by a higher grade fever with chills, extreme fatigue with muscle aches, and in some cases nausea or vomiting. Flu symptoms usually come on faster than cold symptoms. Colds may take 2 or 3 days to develop. Normally, you start feeling the flu over just 2 to 3 hours.

What Causes It?

The common cold is caused by over 100 different viruses and can be incredibly contagious. As a result, the arrival of cold weather keeping people inside and the start of a new school year often lead to a spike in cold cases each year. Seasonal changes in relative humidity also may affect how often people get a cold. The most common cold viruses survive better when humidity is low- during the colder months of the year. Cold weather also may make the inside lining of your nose drier and more vulnerable to viral infection.

Two main viruses cause the seasonal flu: influenza A and influenza B, but unfortunately these viruses can change and adapt to their environment, making it difficult to predict and prevent. Also because this tricky virus likes to change up each year, you can become infected by the flu each year if you don't get a preventative flu shot.

When to Come into MainStreet?

Most patients who contract the flu or a cold will get better with some T.L.C. and over the counter medicine. However, there are certain people who are at risk for developing secondary conditions from the flu or cold viruses and do need medical attention should they get sick. These high-risk patients include pregnant women, children under the age of 2, adults over the age of 50, immunosuppressed patients and those with chronic lung or heart problems.

If you experience a body temperature of 101°F or higher, if you have trouble breathing, a severe sore throat, a productive cough, or a high fever you should seek medical attention as soon as possible.

**If you think you are suffering from a cold or flu,
stop by MainStreet Family Urgent Care!
Open 7 days a week and no appointment necessary!**