

Flu or Cold?

Name _____

Compare and Contrast - Do I have the flu or a cold?

Sometimes it can be difficult to tell the difference between a common cold and the flu. Both have many similar symptoms, but they are actually two entirely different viruses. They appear similar because they are both respiratory illnesses, which means that the virus affects organs that work to help you breathe. They also are both contagious, so they can both spread through contact with other people who have the illness.

Symptoms of a cold are less severe than that of the flu. With a cold, most people have a runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, and they also sneeze frequently. Unlike the flu, these symptoms progress gradually each day the virus is inside of you. With the flu, it is more likely that you would be completely healthy one day and then extremely sick the next.

Symptoms of the flu are more severe. A major difference between a cold and the flu is the presence of a fever. Generally, a fever is common with the flu, and rare with a cold. Additionally, with the flu, body and muscle aches are typical. The flu can also result in more serious health problems, like pneumonia, if not treated. Unlike the common cold, people can get flu shots before the onset of flu season. Flu shots can protect you from some kinds of flu viruses and can reduce the likelihood that those viruses make you sick.

Because both the common cold and flu are viruses, they cannot be cured with medicine; although over-the-counter medications can help make the symptoms feel less severe.

1. Which of the following could be diagnosed as the flu?

- A. "Hi Dr. Nussbaum. I don't feel very well. I've had a stuffy nose and cough for several days. I can do my homework and go to school, but I thought I'd feel better by now."
- B. "Hi Dr. Nussbaum, I felt great yesterday, but terrible today. I have been sneezing all day and am getting a sore throat. Luckily, I don't have a fever."
- C. "Hi Dr. Nussbaum, all of a sudden I feel terrible. It hurts to walk, and I have a high fever and a bad cough. I don't feel like going to school or doing much of anything."
- D. "Hi Dr. Nussbaum, for the past week I've had a stomach ache that's gotten worse each day. I don't have a fever, but I'm sure something is wrong with me."

2. Which of the following is a similarity between the cold and flu?

- A. You can get shots to protect you from the cold and flu
- B. Both the cold and flu can result in fevers and body aches
- C. Medicines can't cure them
- D. Both the cold and flu come on suddenly

3. What is implied about the flu shot?

- A. If you get the flu shot, you won't get the flu
- B. If you get the flu shot, you won't get the flu or a cold
- C. You should get the flu shot during flu season
- D. If you get the flu shot, you still get the flu

4. Both the common cold and flu... (circle all that apply)

- A. affect the respiratory system.
- B. result in high fevers.
- C. can lead to pneumonia.
- D. can have similar symptoms.

5. Which is a symptom of the flu, but not the common cold?

- A. cough
- B. runny nose
- C. sore throat
- D. body pains