

## Is it a Cold? The Flu? Maybe Pneumonia? Or Meningitis!!?

Mistaking one for the other could mean an extended illness and serious complications. So how do you know what you have and when to seek medical care?

**Colds** are usually not serious and can be treated at home.

Symptoms may last 4-14 days and may include:

Runny nose and/or sneezing

Coughing

Sore throat

Head and body aches

Low fever (less than 101°F)

Congestion of the ears, nose, throat and head

**Flu** typically hits in December-March. Acute symptoms last 3-4 days, and cough may linger for 3 weeks. Gastrointestinal symptoms are rare. Symptoms include:

Rapid onset of symptoms

High fever (greater than 101°F)

Severe body aches and/or headache

Dry cough

Extreme fatigue

Chills

**Pneumonia** can be serious and even fatal. See a clinician if you experience symptoms, which include:

High fever (greater than 101°F)

Cough that produces thick, brown or bloody phlegm

Chills

Chest pain while breathing

**Meningitis** requires immediate medical care. One form of bacterial meningitis, called **meningococcal meningitis, can be fatal if untreated**. If you experience meningitis symptoms, consult your clinician or go to an emergency room immediately.

Symptoms include:

High fever (greater than 101°F)

Severe, sudden headache with any of the following:

- Mental changes (e.g. agitation or confusion)
- Neck or back stiffness
- Rash on any part of the body (commonly the armpits, groin, ankles)

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE		
Symptom:	Consider Treating Yourself:	Seek Medical Care:
Sore throat	Scratchy, sore throat Can swallow liquids Minor swelling of neck glands	Difficulty swallowing liquids White or yellow spots in throat Increased pain after 3 days
Fever	Less than 101°F	Greater than 101°F for more than 3 days Fluctuating above 101°F several times a day Shaking chills
Cough	Dry cough	Foul smelling, brown or bloody phlegm Persistent cough Chest pain Wheezing Shortness of breath
Runny nose, sneezing	Relatively clear drainage Mild sinus and/or facial discomfort	Foul smelling, brown or bloody drainage Severe sinus and/or facial discomfort
Headache	Mild pain Pain that improves with non-prescription pain reliever (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprophen)	Blurred vision, dizziness, nausea or vomiting Neck or back stiffness Mental changes (e.g. agitation or confusion) Severe headache with fever greater than 101°F and rash on any part of the body <b>SEEK MEDICAL CARE IMMEDIATELY!</b>
Body ache	General aches	Persistent pain in abdomen
Fatigue	General tiredness	Excessive fatigue
Earache	Stuffy or clogged ears	Pain or discharge from ears