

## SOME ANSWERS TO WHAT AILS YOU

With the winter season come the winter maladies. Here's a chart that will help you figure out what you might have and if you might want to visit your doctor soon.

Flu	Cold	Strep throat	Pneumonia	Bronchitis
<b>WHAT IT IS</b> Infection of the respiratory tract	Infection of the upper respiratory tract	Throat infection	Lung infection	Inflammation of the bronchi that funnel air from the throat to the lungs
<b>SYMPTOMS</b> Fever, chills and muscle pain	Sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, congestion	Sore throat, chills, fever, headache and nausea	Coughing, chest pain, chills, fever and shortness of breath	Severe cough, fatigue, chills, muscle aches and sore throat
<b>CAUSES</b> Caused by one of three types of influenza virus	More than 100 different viruses can cause a cold	Caused by certain strains of strep bacteria	Various types of bacteria, viruses and fungi	Triggered by a variety of factors that infect or irritate the bronchi
<b>TRANSMISSION</b> Spread through direct or indirect contact with an infected person	Spread through direct or indirect contact with an infected person	Exposure to infected person or by putting hand in mouth after touching an infected object	Complication of another illness, such as the flu, or spread through direct or indirect contact	Exposure to infected droplets or mucus; not contagious when caused by irritants
<b>WHO'S SUSCEPTIBLE</b> Children and young adults – most devastating to elderly and chronically ill	The physically or emotionally fatigued, women ovulating and young children	Children more often than adults	Smokers; those with weakened immune systems, diabetes or heart disease; infants and the elderly	People with chronic heart or lung disease, smokers and the elderly
<b>TREATMENT</b> Vaccines shield most viruses for one year. Antiviral drugs, painkillers, plenty of rest and large amounts of water help treat the illness.	Rest is the best treatment. Antibiotics treat infections, but not the cold virus. Moderate doses of vitamin C may cut duration of illness.	Antibiotics shorten the duration of illness.	Drugs combat bacterial and fungal infections, but are less effective against viruses. An annual flu shot helps prevent viral pneumonia.	Antibiotics are effective against a bacterial infection. For other infections, treatments include steam inhalation and machines to dilate the bronchi.
<b>DID YOU KNOW</b> There is no such thing as stomach flu. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea are symptoms of other illnesses.	About 2 percent of cold sufferers will develop sinusitis.	Scarlet fever is another form of strep throat.	Some bacteria that cause pneumonia are now resistant to antibiotics due to misuse of the medication for similar viral infections.	It is rarely fatal; deep bronchial cough is actually productive because it clears secretions that can become infected.



Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica online; Merck Manual; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; American Family Physician; NewsHour with Jim Lehrer transcript