

# Is it the flu or is it a cold?

What difference does it make? I feel lousy.



by Marie F. Bolduc

I could never figure it out. Now I know. Many of the symptoms of the flu and the common cold are similar: head congestion, sore throat, coughing, headache, fatigue, sneezing, watery eyes, aches and pain, fever. The difference is, in the case of the flu, the symptoms are much worse and last longer than a few days, often accompanied by blistering fever, chills, nausea, even vomiting. Occasionally, the flu can escalate to bronchitis and pneumonia.

While the flu demands that you rest as much as possible, a cold begs for you to move around, to loosen up built-up mucus and fluids. In fact, not only is staying in bed for ordinary sniffles unnecessary, it will probably make you feel worse. So, remember, a brisk walk, or any other type of moderate exercise, will only make you feel better, if you have a cold.

Both the common cold and the flu are viral, which means they can be transmitted via saliva, coughing and hands, so remember to throw out your tissues and to wash your hands often throughout the day.

Viral infections are an attack on our immune system. It is estimated that most healthy adults get an average of two colds per year. Children generally get many more because their immune system is not fully developed and because they have not yet developed immunity to many of the viruses that cause colds. If an adult gets a cold more often, or ones that lasts longer than the average week or so, it may be a sign that their immune system is weak and not functioning optimally.

## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY. RESPECT YOUR LIMITS.

While there is no cure for the common cold or the flu, only relief of symptoms, your best approach is prevention. How do you keep your immune system strong? Manage your stress. Researchers have linked vulnerability to colds and flu to stress. So do whatever works for you: walking, sports, yoga, meditation.

Choose real, wholesome foods. Rest when you're tired. Make sure your intestinal flora is in good shape because over 40 years of age, the greater share of your immune system's efficiency is generated in the gastro intestinal (GI) tract. Minimize your exposure to environmental toxins and pollution. Tune in to your body. Develop your intuition. (Ever noticed that word, *in-tuition*, as in self-teaching. Interesting, isn't it?)

Respect your limits. Care for yourself as you would a dear one. I used to say to a good friend of mine, whenever I saw her over exert herself at her small growing wine business, 'You mean you haven't eaten all day? Is that the way you would care for your child?' That would really pique her pride.

Reach out for support when you need it. Give your body the kind of care it needs to provide you with the strength, stamina and clarity of mind that you need in order to engage in all of those wonderful projects you want to make happen in your lifetime.

## FIGHT BACK

- Get support, if you need it.
- Drink oodles of quality fluids to prevent dehydration and help flush out the body.
- Good ol' chicken broth seasoned with cayenne pepper to soothe your soul and body and help keep mucus flowing, prevent congestion and headaches.
- Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to your hot bath water and breathe in deeply.
- Load up on fresh fruits, garlic and fresh ginger for their potent antiviral, antibacterial and antioxidant properties.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day.

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