



HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE ALLERGIES OR A COLD?

It can be difficult to tell if your symptoms are caused by a cold or seasonal allergies. However, there are certain signs and symptoms that can help to distinguish colds from allergies.

The chart below lists how often certain symptoms are caused by colds or seasonal allergies.

Symptoms	Colds	Allergies
Cough	Usually	Sometimes
Body aches and pains	Sometimes	Never
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes
Itchy eyes	Rarely	Usually
Sneezing	Usually	Usually
Sore throat	Usually	Sometimes
Runny nose	Usually	Usually
Fever	Rarely	Never
Duration	3-14 days	Weeks

Seasonal allergies differ from colds in that they appear mostly in the spring and fall when pollen and mold are most prominent. In contrast, colds can be caught at any time after contact with infected people or exposure to objects or droplets in the air that contain cold viruses. Allergies to food or pollen and ragweed are caused by your immune system becoming “sensitized” to allergens over time. Skin tests performed in your doctor’s office can identify if you are sensitive to certain allergens.

When you have a cold, it’s important that you treat early. You can use expectorants for chest congestion and pseudoephedrine for sinus pressure. In tandem with medications, you should get as much rest as possible. Additionally, keeping hydrated allows your body to keep mucus moving. When mucus stays still in your body, that’s when it causes problems and discomfort. The earlier you treat your cold, the more likely mucus is to keep moving, which may help you feel better faster.

SOURCE: **National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases website.** www.niaid.nih.gov. Accessed May 7, 2015.



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