

Is it a Cold, Flu or Pertussis?

Colds, flu and Pertussis are highly contagious and, in the initial stages, might seem alike. Check the following table for a comparison of the symptoms for each illness.

Symptom		Influenza ("Flu")	Cold (Viral URI)	Pertussis
Fever		Usually present and high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically lasts 3-4 days	Uncommon	Uncommon If present, typically low-grade
Headache		Very common	Uncommon	Uncommon
Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort		Common, Often severe	Slight to Moderate	Uncommon
Fatigue and weakness		Moderate - severe; can last up to 14-21 days	Mild	Mild to moderate
Extreme exhaustion		Very common early in illness	Extremely Rare	Rare
Stuffy or runny nose		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sneezing		Sometimes	Common	Common, early in the disease
Sore throat		Sometimes	Common	Uncommon
C O U G H	Character	Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical; nocturnal cough rare	Hacking cough, often productive; nocturnal cough rare; usually responds to cough medications	Variable character; fits / paroxysms and nocturnal cough are common; generally not responsive to cough medications
	Severity	Moderate	Mild to Moderate	Variable; can be mild in adults and very severe in infants and young children
	Duration	Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days	Typically 3-7 days	Persistent cough, almost always >1week, usually 2-6 weeks, sometimes 10+ weeks
	Paroxysms	Uncommon	Rare	Common
Infectious Period		1-2 days before symptom onset to 5-10 days after	Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer	From start of catarrhal phase (before cough) to 21 days after cough onset*

*or until taking 5 days of appropriate anti-pertussis antibiotics, or until a nasopharyngeal pertussis PCR is negative, whichever occurs first <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/communicable/influenza/ColdFluPertussis.htm>

When To Keep Your Child Home:

If your child goes to the doctor or dentist please ask your provider for a medical note concerning any restrictions in gym or class and the days your child should be absent from school. Turn the medical note into the office and it will be used to cover your child's absence.

1. Keep your child home if sick. Any temperature of 100 degrees or higher, requires exclusion from school. If your child is requiring Tylenol or Ibuprofen to keep the fever down, they must stay home. They should be fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of medication to maintain a normal temperature.
2. Certain bacterial conditions which are prescribed antibiotics, such as strep throat and impetigo, require students to be on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
3. If your child has diarrhea and/or vomiting, please keep them home until their bodies have had time to recover. Sometimes, children return too early and end up having a relapse or infecting more students.
4. Cold symptoms serious enough to interfere with the child's ability to learn.
5. Coughing that causes difficulty breathing, vomiting and/or moderate to severe chest pain.
6. Headache severe enough to interfere with learning.
7. Abdominal pain accompanied by elevated temperature, vomiting, or diarrhea.
8. Sore throat serious enough to interfere with swallowing or accompanied by a fever or rash.
9. Pink eye-if drainage present or discomfort interferes with learning. If a student is unable to avoid touching eyes.

--Tiphany Kokott RN