

Nurse Practitioner Notes

Amanda Morningstar FNP-C

Do You Have the Flu or a Cold?

Flu:

Caused By: 2 types of influenza virus, which have many different strains

Target: Nose, throat, lungs

Transmission: Inhalation or contact w/ contaminated surfaces

Symptoms: Fever, aches, chills, tiredness, sudden onset. Also headaches, sore throat, hacking cough. Possibly vomiting and diarrhea in young children

Result: 2-4 days in bed. May lead to bronchitis, sinus or ear infections, pneumonia, hospitalization, and death. Complications more likely if pregnant, history of chronic medical condition, or in the very young or very old

Prevention: Annual flu vaccine for everyone age 6 months and older, especially the elderly, pregnant women, and those w/ chronic medical conditions

Treatment: Bed rest, liquids, and over-the-counter flu medicines. Prescription antivirals may shorten duration if given early in course of illness

Cold:

Caused By: More than 200 types of rhinovirus

Target: Nose and throat

Transmission: Inhalation or contact w/ contaminated surfaces

Symptoms: Runny nose, sneezing, nasal congestion. Often a sore throat, mild cough, mild aches, and/or fatigue. Possibly fever in young children

Result: 1-3 weeks of discomfort

Prevention: Frequent hand-washing! Zinc lozenges and vitamin C may shorten the duration of a cold

Treatment: Over-the-counter cold medicines/analgesics

****Please contact your health care provider if your illness is not resolving or is worsening!****