



Is it a cold or more?

You've had a runny nose, sore throat, and other cold symptoms for days and you're wondering if it's time to call the doctor. Here's some good news: In most situations, cold symptoms will be over within a week to 12 days. The bad news is there are no real medical tests to determine if you, in fact, have a cold and no medical treatment to end the annoying and uncomfortable cold symptoms. If you have tried over-the-counter cold remedies without success, there are several prescription medications available that may help with symptoms such as nasal stuffiness and cough. If you have a sore throat with fever and no cold symptoms, you should make an appointment to see your doctor. This type of sore throat may be strep throat, which is a bacterial infection that needs antibiotics.

If you have chest tightness, difficulty taking a breath, and/or wheezing, call your doctor. You may have a cold complication such as bronchitis or chest cold. Or you might have asthma and a cold. In either case, your doctor may need to see you to let you know if further treatment is necessary.

Colds can cause an earache, mainly from congestion and swelling of the Eustachian tube, the tube that connects the ear to the throat. However, if decongestants don't help the pain or it persists for more than a couple of days, check with your doctor. You may have an ear infection. If your doctor thinks you have a bacterial ear infection, then you may need antibiotics. Many ear infections are due to viruses.

Also, if you have facial pain, tooth pain, or yellow drainage from your nose, you may have a sinus infection -- an infection of the nasal passages. While these symptoms can be present with just a cold, if you've had them for more than a week, you may need antibiotics.

**If you would like more information, please contact
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