

**Managing Cold, Flu, and Coronavirus**  
**Advice from Napa Valley College Student Health Services**



If you think you might have the Flu or Coronavirus: stay home. Symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Return to class or work after your fever has been less than 100.4 degrees for 24 hours. If you do not have a thermometer, judge by symptoms. If you don't have heavy sweating or shaking chills, you probably don't have a high fever.

**Is it a Cold, Flu, or COVID-19/novel Coronavirus?**

*These diseases are all caused by viruses. It can be difficult to tell them apart without lab tests. But here are some clues.....*

Signs and Symptoms	Cold	Flu	Coronavirus
Incubation period	2-3 days	1-4 days	2-14 days
Symptom onset	Gradual	Abrupt	Variable
Fever	Rare	Usual	Usual
Cough	Mild to Moderate	Common	Usual
Shortness of breath	Uncommon	Sometimes	Sometimes
Chills	Uncommon	Fairly common	Usual
Headache	Rare	Common	Uncommon
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Uncommon

**Complications** of Cold, Flu and COVID-19/novel Coronavirus can include bacterial infections such as bronchitis, ear infections or pneumonia; flare ups of asthma; dehydration. Full recovery from serious cases of flu or COVID-19 may take several weeks, with people experiencing prolonged fatigue and cough. While the vast majority of people with flu or COVID-19 will recover completely, it is possible for these diseases to prove fatal, especially for the elderly, those with compromised immune system, or with chronic diseases.

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## **Treatment**

Influenza, the common cold and COVID-19 are all caused by viruses. Antibiotics do not work against viruses. In the case of the flu, some medications, such as Tamiflu, may shorten the illness by a day or two, or make it less severe. These medicines require a prescription from a medical provider.

## **Symptom Relief**

Several over the counter medications and home remedies, while not curing the disease, help manage your symptoms and make you more comfortable.

**Pain & Fever:** Aspirin, acetaminophen (Tylenol), naproxen (Alleve) ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil)  
*Be careful not to take more than the recommended dosage of these medicines. Even though they are over the counter, they can cause severe side effects, even death if taken in excess. Be especially careful with acetaminophen. It is included in several over the counter combination medicines, and a person could easily take too much if they take several products on the same day.*

### **Runny nose and stuffiness:**

#### **Anti-histamines:**

**Diphenhydramine (Benadryl, others)** is the most effective but causes sleepiness. Take it at night, or when you will not be driving, operating dangerous machinery, and so forth.

**Loratidine (Claritin), cetirizine (Zyrtec), fexofenadine (Allegra)** – help a little bit, and don't cause too much sleepiness.

**Chlortrimeton (chloramiframine):** in the middle. Not as effective as Benadryl, and causes a little sleepiness. I like it for day time.

#### **Decongestants: pseudoed (need to ask the pharmacist for it); phenylephrine.**

Somewhat effective, can make you feel wired; avoid before bedtime.

**Afrin (oxymetolazine)** Nasal spray can be very effective but if you use it for more than 3-5 Days, you can get rebound symptoms when you try to stop.

### **Cough and Sore throat:**

**“DM” (dextromethorphan)** is mildly effective cough suppressant; some studies have shown **honey** is more effective.

Other cough suppressants require prescriptions.: **Benzonate (Tessalon)**, is effective and non-sedating; **narcotic-based** (such as codeine cough syrup) can make you sleepy.

**Guiafeneson (Mucinex)** is supposed to help you cough up thick secretions. ? effectiveness; Better to concentrate on staying **hydrated**.

Analgesic throat lozenges, or sprays such as cepacol can temporarily numb the throat.

**Warm fluids** help sore throats, whether teas, soups, or gargling with salt water.

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**General Measures**

**Rest, drink lots of fluids**

**Chicken Soup** really seems to help; spices that make your eyes water (peppers, lemon grass, ginger) can promote drainage. (Hot and sour soup anyone?)

**Aromatic oils:** eucalyptus, peppermint oil, menthol, rosemary, thyme, mint, basil tea tree oils- (**Vicks Vapo-Rub**) can ease congestion, and may inhibit infection

**Humidify air or inhale steam**

