

## ALLERGY, COLD, OR FLU?: SEEKING THE SOURCE OF YOUR SNIFFLES

For questions about this information, please call Kentuckiana Allergy, PSC  
Leesgate Road (502) 426-1621

KYA-63 (Rev. 11-4-09)

FEATURES	ALLERGIES	COLDS	INFLUENZA
Cause	Inherited reaction to things in the environment. Touching or breathing or ingesting these things causes the body to react and to release a chemical (Histamine) which makes the bothersome symptoms below. Common culprits are trees, grasses, molds, dust mites, animal dander or saliva, cockroaches, foods, and food additives.	Any one of over 200 viruses caught by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ hands carrying virus to the nose, or eyes. (Viruses can live up to 4 hours on surfaces like door knobs and countertops.)</li> <li>■ breathing virus in from air (Someone else's cough or sneeze makes the virus airborne)</li> <li>■ transferring virus directly from mucous membrane to mucous membrane (e.g. Kissing)</li> </ul>	Influenza viruses A (biggest culprit), B and C breathed in from the air (Someone else's cough or sneeze makes the virus airborne). The influenza A virus has minor changes each year, and major changes each decade in its makeup, affecting its ability to infect people.
Number of episodes	Related to frequency of exposure to allergen	Adults get 2-4 colds per year. Children get 6	Usually only once per year, if at all.
Peak season	Occurs year-round or in seasons spring and fall	Fall, winter, and spring	October - April
Complications	Nasal polyps, sinusitis Asthma trigger/worsening	Sinusitis, otitis media	Bronchitis, Pneumonia Death in frail or immunosuppressed
Treatment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Avoid provoking substances</li> <li>2. OTC or Rx antihistamines (e.g.. Benadryl, Claritin) as needed + decongestants (e.g.. Sudafed)</li> <li>3. Rx nasal sprays regularly - Cromolyn Sodium or nasal steroid sprays (e.g.. Vancenase)</li> <li>4. Immunotherapy (Desensitization shots)</li> <li>5. Oral steroid pills or antibiotics for complications</li> </ol>	<p>No cure. Symptomatic relief by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-care - Rest, force fluids, no smoking, environmental humidity, use disposable tissues (not reusable handkerchiefs)</li> <li>2. Over-the-counter medications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ decongestants (Sudafed, Afrin)</li> <li>■ analgesics (Tylenol)</li> <li>■ antitussives (Robitussin)</li> <li>■ Rx agents only if complications</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>Oral antiviral Amantadine for Type A</p> <p>Symptomatic relief by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Self-care - rest, (others based on symptoms)</li> <li>2. Over-the-counter medications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ analgesics/antipyretics every 4 hours (Tylenol)</li> <li>■ Others as for colds, based on symptoms</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
Prevention	Avoid provoking substances	Frequent hand washing Avoid aspirin products	Annual flu vaccine (not for people allergic to eggs) Oral antiviral Amantadine for Type A



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Symptoms:	A chronic condition	Overall, a mild episodic illness	Overall, a more serious episodic illness
Onset	Often appears in childhood Immediate or delayed reaction after exposure	Gradual; Nasal symptoms appear first. Symptoms start 1-6 days after exposure	Sudden; Systemic symptoms appear first. Symptoms start 1-3 days after exposure
Fever	No fever	Rarely feverish	Feverish - up to 106 F, may last 1 wk.
Headache	No headaches unless complications	Rare headache	Prominent headaches
Body aches	No body aches	Mild body aches	Muscle or joint aches may be severe
Fatigue	Fatigue is often associated	Mild fatigue	Extreme fatigue, may last 2-3 weeks
Nasal airway	Stuffy or blocked nose, may be itchy	Usually stuffy, blocked nose	Sometimes stuffy or blocked nose
Nasal discharge	Clear, watery anterior or posterior nasal drainage	Clear, watery nasal discharge (may thicken)	Sometimes clear, watery nasal discharge
Sneezing	Paroxysmal sneezing (many times in a row)	Usual - singular sneezes occurring randomly together with other symptoms	Sometimes singular sneezes with other symptoms
Throat	Scratchy, itchy throat (clucking tongue sound)	Scratchy or sore throat common	Sometimes scratchy, sore throat
Eyes	Itchy, watery, red, swollen eyes. May have dark circles beneath, "allergic shiners"	Eyes usually not affected	Eyes usually not affected, may be watery
Cough	Coughing common, especially related to asthma or post nasal drip	Mild to moderate hacking cough	Coughing common; can become severe
Chest discomfort	Chest discomfort only related to asthma	Mild to moderate chest discomfort	Chest discomfort common; can become severe