

# Common cold

Also called: cold

A common viral infection of the nose and throat.

## Very common

More than 10 million cases per year (India)



Spreads easily



Usually self-treatable



Usually self-diagnosable



Lab tests or imaging not required



Short-term: resolves within days to weeks

In contrast to the flu, a common cold can be caused by many different types of viruses. The condition is generally harmless and symptoms usually resolve within two weeks.

Symptoms include a runny nose, sneezing and congestion. High fever or severe symptoms are reasons to see a doctor, especially in children.

Most people recover on their own within two weeks. Over-the-counter products and home remedies can help control symptoms.

## How it spreads

By airborne respiratory droplets (coughs or sneezes).

By skin-to-skin contact (handshakes or hugs).

By saliva (kissing or shared drinks).

By touching a contaminated surface (blanket or doorknob).

## Symptoms

### Usually self-diagnosable

Symptoms include a runny nose, sneezing and congestion. High fever or severe symptoms are reasons to see a doctor, especially in children.

### People may experience:

**Pain areas:** in the muscles

**Cough:** can be with phlegm

**Nasal:** congestion, runny nose, sneezing, loss of smell, redness, or post-nasal drip

**Whole body:** chills, fatigue, fever, or malaise

**Eyes:** watery eyes or redness

**Head:** congestion or sinus pressure

**Also common:** body ache, chest discomfort, headache, swollen lymph nodes, or throat irritation

Consult a doctor for medical advice

Note: The information you see describes what usually happens with a medical condition, but doesn't apply to everyone. This information isn't medical advice, so make sure that you contact a health care provider if you have a medical problem. If you think you may have a medical emergency, call your doctor or a emergency number immediately.

**Sources:** Apollo Hospitals and others. [Learn more](#)