

Tis the Season for Allergies!

It's that time of year again, its allergy season! Oh, you know that annoying coughing, sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes, and even congestion that we all just "love oh so dearly?" Don't worry, you are not alone. For some people, allergies are seasonal, but for others, it can be a year-round problem.

What are the differences between Cold vs. Flu vs. Seasonal Allergies vs. COVID-19 symptoms?



As we continue to move through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to know the differences in symptoms between the cold, flu, allergies, and COVID-19. Allergies are caused by pollen and allergens in the environment that causes the body to have an immune response and reaction to it. Whereas, the cold, flu, and COVID-19 are caused by viruses. For more information on the differences, listen to [this Podcast](#) by Dr. Sara Narayan, an Allergist with Allergy West, affiliated with Emerson Hospital, explaining the difference between allergies and COVID-19. If you have been exposed to a person infected with COVID-19 or have symptoms that concern you for COVID-19, make sure to get tested by your healthcare provider. For updates on COVID-19 Vaccination updates, please follow our [Facebook](#) or [COVID-19 News](#).

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COLD vs. FLU vs. ALLERGIES vs. COVID-19

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU	ALLERGIES	COVID-19** (can range from mild to serious)
Fever	Rare	High (100-102°F), Can last 3-4 days	Never	Common
Headache	Rare	Intense	Uncommon	Can be present
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual, often severe	Never	Can be present
Fatigue, Weakness	Mild	Intense, can last up to 2-3 weeks	Sometimes	Can be present
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Usual (starts early)	Never	Can be present
Stuffy / Runny Nose	Common	Sometimes	Common	Has been reported
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Usual	Has been reported
Sore Throat	Common	Common	Sometimes	Has been reported
Cough	Mild to moderate	Common, can become severe	Sometimes	Common
Shortness of Breath	Rare	Rare	Rare, except for those with allergic asthma	In more serious infections

Sources: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, CDC, WHO. **Information is still evolving
<https://www.fox21news.com/health/coronavirus/is-it-a-cold-flu-allergies-or-the-covid-19/>

What ways to prevent allergies?

- Preventative measures such as vacuuming carpets, drapes, and upholstery with a HEPA vacuum cleaner often (at least weekly) help reduce allergens and removes them from your living or work environment. Also, make sure that you are changing the air filters regularly in your home.
- Remove carpets, upholstered furniture, encasing pillows, mattresses, and box springs, and wash them in hot water. Cover pillows and mattresses in allergen-proof coverings.
- And of course, try and stay away from allergens. If you need help identifying what you may be allergic to throughout the seasons, use pollen.com as a resource for current pollen counts and forecasts.

Treatment for Allergies

There are many over-the-counter medications you can take to help with your allergy symptoms!

- According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) and the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology (ACAAI), nasal corticosteroids such as Flonase (fluticasone) or Rhinocort (budesonide) are recommended first-line for treating moderate to severe allergies. These medications will improve symptoms over a week. **Bremo Pharmacist Helpful Tip:** Make sure to blow nose before using the nasal spray. Look down and insert the tip of nasal spray and angle towards the outside ear and away from the middle of the nose or septum. Spray nasal spray while sniffing. Wash the nostril tip facing down in warm water after use ensuring water does not go down into the nasal spray. This will help with the burning sensation associated with using nasal sprays. Additional side effects include nasal dryness or nose bleeds.
- Also, oral Antihistamines such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine), Claritin (loratadine), Allegra (fexofenadine), and Zyrtec (cetirizine) are can be added to nasal corticosteroid therapy for the treatment of seasonal allergies. However, caution should be used as some of these antihistamines can cause drowsiness and may cause some confusion in older adults, such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine). Claritin (loratadine) and Zyrtec (cetirizine) causes less drowsiness in most people and should be taken in the evening; however, Allegra (fexofenadine) typically does not cause drowsiness and can be taken during the day. Additional side effects may include dry mouth and constipation.

How to treat congestion associated with my allergies?

- Saline nasal irrigation with saline spray or commonly called neti pots helps clear nasal congestion. Additionally, it helps clear away mucus that may prevent other nasal sprays from working properly in the nose. Saline nasal irrigation removes the allergens and creates an environment where it is harder for bacteria to grow which can lead to nasal or sinus infections. According to the [FDA](#), if using saline irrigation systems like a neti pot, then make sure to use distilled or sterile water. Do not use water from the tap unless it is boiled for 3 to 5 minutes then cooled to lukewarm.
- Additionally, Sudafed (pseudoephedrine) that is behind the pharmacy is another choice to help relieve your stuffiness! Anything with a “D” at the end of the name is a decongestant, for example, Zyrtec-D or Allegra-D. Use caution with these medications as they can cause a rapid heart rate and generally are not recommended in those with high blood pressure.
- For those with high blood pressure, Coricidin HBP (dextromethorphan and chlorpheniramine maleate) or saline nasal sprays are recommended for the treatment of nasal congestions.

If you still have questions on what you should take for your allergies?

Give our [Bremo Pharmacists](#) a call at (804)-288-8361 and they will be happy to assist you!

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