

It can sometimes be difficult to tell if the illness you have is a cold or an allergy.

What Are Their Causes?

Colds and allergies have different causes: a cold is normally caused by a virus and an allergy is a result of an overactive immune system. When you have a cold, any number of the hundreds of viruses out there could have caused it but once your body recognizes the virus, your immune system will begin fighting the virus. When this happens, you usually experience a stuffy nose and/or an irritating cough. It is very easy to pick up a cold virus from someone who sneezes or coughs directly on you. Allergies, on the other hand, are not contagious and are simply your body's response to a trigger, such as pollen, grass or animal hair.

The Biggest Differences

A cold and an allergy may have the same symptoms but there are a few key differences to take note of if you would like to know which one you have. An allergy comes on all of a sudden or only in certain situations when your body is exposed to anything you are allergic to. You may experience itchy, red and watery eyes. However, you should not experience any fever. Mucus is also generally watery or clear, and symptoms may feel very intense for the first few days but should be the same every day.

A cold, on the other hand, although it can appear suddenly is often accompanied by a fever. In addition, you may experience sneezing, coughing, mild body aches, a sore throat. Itchy eyes are not common with a cold and your virus should clear up within a week to 10 days. Your mucus may become green and thick and your symptoms can change every few days. For example, you may start out with a sore throat and congested nose and then feel it progress to cough with sinus pain.

Do you need professional health and wellness advice for you and your family? Contact us to schedule an appointment today!