

Keep well this winter

Take care of your health and help protect your whānau and community.



Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds and dry them well.



Get the flu vaccine each year – it might be free for you.



Quit smoking – smokers get more colds, symptoms are worse and they last longer.



Stay warm – heat your home to at least 18°C.



Keep your immune system strong: be active, eat healthy food, be smoke-free and get plenty of sleep.



Each year, there are a number of different bugs in our communities that cause colds and flu-like illnesses.

These respiratory infections are usually caused by viruses and include the common cold, influenza and new outbreaks of flu-like illnesses such as the coronavirus COVID-19.

You can treat most colds and flu-like illnesses with self-care and rest at home, but you need to know when to seek medical help.



Got a cold or flu?

Find out what to do



Self care for colds and the flu

- **Rest at home**
- **Drink plenty of water**
- **Blocked or runny nose? Cough?** Ask your pharmacist about nasal sprays, decongestants, lozenges or cough mixtures.
- **Sore throat?** Suck a teaspoon of honey (not safe for children under one year) or gargle salt water. Adults can also try a medicated lozenge, gargle or throat spray.
- **Aches and pains?** Try paracetamol OR cold and flu medicines (check doses carefully and ask your doctor or pharmacist if safe for you).

Avoid antibiotics – they can't cure colds, flus or most coughs as these are caused by viruses.



When to seek advice

Contact your medical clinic if you:

- are not getting better
- are pregnant
- have diabetes or a health condition affecting your breathing, heart or immune system
- are aged 65 or older
- have a sore throat and are Māori or Pasifika aged 3 to 35 years
- are concerned or not sure what to do.

Phone first if you might have a highly infectious virus like COVID-19.

Need health advice?

- Phone Healthline free on 0800 611 116
- For COVID-19 health advice visit [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) or phone 0800 358 5453

When to seek immediate medical help

If you have any of the following signs you may be seriously unwell and need emergency care:

- difficult or painful breathing
- bluish lips or tongue
- chest pain
- coughing up blood
- severe shaking, rigors
- confusion or difficult to wake
- stiff neck
- rash with purple or red spots or bruises
- clammy skin
- not urinating or dark coloured pee.



Phone 111 or go to the hospital emergency department right now. Do not delay.

Cold and flu symptoms are similar, but flu-like illnesses are usually more severe.

Symptoms of COVID-19 can be similar to a cold or flu and range from mild to severe.

Signs and symptoms	Cold	Flu-like illness
Symptom onset	Gradual	Often sudden
Fever and chills	Uncommon	Common
Head and body aches	Uncommon	Common
Fatigue, extreme tiredness	Uncommon	Common
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes
Cough	Sometimes	Common
Sneezing, runny nose	Common	Uncommon

Avoid spreading and catching bugs:

- **wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds and dry them well**
- **cover your coughs with a tissue or cough into your elbow, then wash your hands**
- **don't cough near others**
- **avoid touching your face**
- **don't share cups, utensils or towels**
- **clean and disinfect surfaces often**
- **stay home if you are sick and avoid close contact with others.**

