

Frequently Asked Questions

Flu and Colds in Adults

How can Medi24 help?

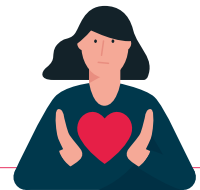
If this leaflet does not sufficiently answer your questions, please call us – we are happy to help.

In the case of flu and colds, our doctors can issue **sick leave certificates** for work (however, certain restrictions apply, e.g. not retroactively, for a maximum of 3–5 days).

If necessary and considered appropriate by our doctor, **prescription medication** can be prescribed (however, no codeine-based cough medicines).

What can I do to stay healthy?

- ✓ Annual **flu vaccination** (recommended especially for risk groups)
- ✓ **Healthy lifestyle**: get plenty of fresh air, stay active, sleep well, eat a balanced diet, and manage stress
- ✓ **Wash / disinfect your hands** regularly
- ✓ **Keep your distance** from people who are ill



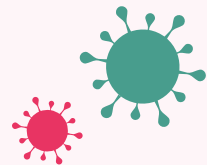
How can I tell the difference between flu and a cold?

Flu (influenza):

- ✓ **Sudden onset with severe feeling of illness**
- ✓ **Typical**: high fever, severe headache and body aches, severe fatigue, dry cough
- ✓ **Rare** and rather mild: runny nose and sore throat
- ✓ **Possible**, but rather rare: nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach ache
- ✓ **Duration**: 7–14 days, cough often lasts 2–3 weeks
- ✓ **Improvement**: of fever / body aches after 3–5 days, fatigue may persist longer

Common Cold (respiratory tract infection):

- ✓ **Slow onset, usually mild**
- ✓ **Typical**: runny / blocked nose, sore throat, cough (may be congested), sometimes slight fever
- ✓ **Rare** and rather mild: headache & body aches
- ✓ **Duration**: 7–14 days
- ✓ **Improvement**: usually after 5–7 days



When should I see a doctor?

- ✓ If **symptoms do not improve after 5–7 days** or worsen
- ✓ If the **fever (>38°)** lasts longer than 3 days or keeps coming back
- ✓ In case of **shortness of breath, chest pain or severe illness**
- ✓ If you are **unsure**, if there is a **sudden deterioration** or if the situation worsens again after initially improving
- ✓ **Pregnant women, elderly people (>65 years) and people with chronic illnesses** (e.g. heart, lung, diabetes) **are advised to see a doctor early**

How does the doctor find out what I have?

- ✓ Usually by **talking with you and doing a physical examination**
- ✓ Blood tests or X-rays: only in severe or complicated cases
- ✓ Nose / throat swab test for germs: usually only done for people at risk, with complications, or in severe cases



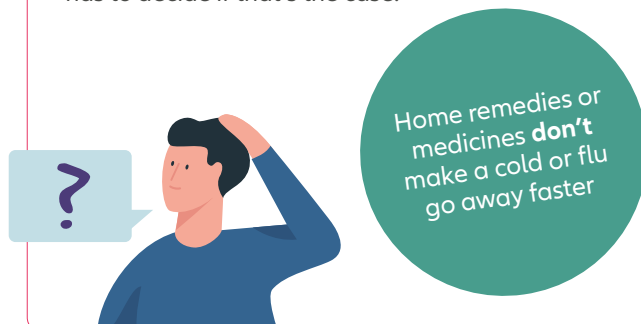
What can I do myself to recover faster?

It takes **patience** – the **immune system needs time** to do its job. You can support recovery and **relieve symptoms** by:

- ✓ **Rest & relaxation:** do not overexert your body
- ✓ **Drink plenty** (2–3 litres of water or tea): prevents dehydration and loosens mucus
- ✓ **Light, vitamin-rich diet:** supports the immune system
- ✓ **Improve indoor climate:** ventilate apartment regularly (open all windows for 5 min, 2–3 times daily), increase humidity (strengthens the mucous membranes, reduces dry cough / nasal congestion)

Do antibiotics help against flu or colds?

No – colds and flu are **caused by viruses**, so antibiotics don't help. Antibiotics are only necessary in the case of an additional **bacterial** infection (such as pneumonia or an ear infection), and a doctor has to decide if that's the case.



Home remedies and medicines that can help ease symptoms:

Sore throat:

- ✓ Gargling with sage or chamomile tea, sucking on cough drops
- ✓ Throat lozenges or gargle solutions from the pharmacy
- ✓ If needed: ibuprofen (per package instructions) if the above measures are not sufficient

Runny / blocked nose:

- ✓ Nasal rinse with saline solution
- ✓ Steam inhalation with saline solution or chamomile tea
- ✓ Short-term use of decongestant nasal sprays from the pharmacy (maximum use: 5 days to avoid dependency)

Cough:

- ✓ Warm drinks, honey, onion syrup
- ✓ Steam inhalation with saline solution or chamomile tea
- ✓ Cough remedies from the pharmacy (in the form of tablets, syrups, or drops)

Fever / body aches / headache:

- ✓ Drink plenty (water or tea)
- ✓ Paracetamol or ibuprofen (per package instructions)

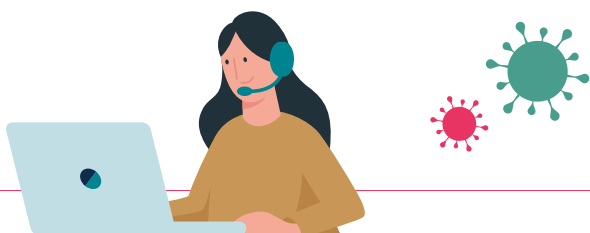
Note:

Most cold medicines are available over the counter at pharmacies and are not covered by health insurance, even with a prescription.



Can I go to work, or should I stay at home?

- ✓ If you have a **mild cold without fever**, you can go to work. Wearing a mask or working from home is recommended to avoid infecting colleagues
- ✓ **Stay at home if you have a fever** or strong cold symptoms (for 3–5 days)
- ✓ **Avoid contact with vulnerable people** (pregnant women, elderly, sick, or newborns) while strong symptoms persist (first 5–7 days)



Can I travel by plane if I have a cold or the flu?

- ✓ **Mild cold:** flying is possible, but symptoms (e.g. ear pressure, sinus infection, cough) may become worse
- ✓ **Severe symptoms** (fever, blocked nose, severe cough, ear pressure or earache): it is better to postpone your trip
- ✓ **Tips for flying with a cold:** use a nasal spray before take-off and landing (ideally starting 2 days before). Drink plenty of fluids (avoid alcohol), yawn or chew to equalise ear pressure, and wear a mask to protect others
- ✓ **If in doubt:** please call us, we are happy to help