

Influenza vs. Colds vs. Pertussis

| Symptom | Influenza ("Flu") | Colds (Viral Upper Respiratory Infection) | Pertussis |
|--|--|---|---|
| Fever | Usually present & high (102-104°F or 39-40°C); typically | Uncommon If present, typically low-grade | Uncommon If present, typically low-grade |
| Chills | Common | Uncommon | Rare |
| Headache | Very common | Uncommon | Uncommon |
| Aches and pains, muscle aches, chest discomfort | Very common; Often severe | Slight to Moderate | Uncommon |
| Fatigue and weakness | Moderate-severe; can last up to 14-21 days | Mild | Mild; Patient usually appears well between coughing attacks |
| Extreme exhaustion | Very common early in illness | Extremely rare | Rare |
| Stuffy or runny nose | Common | Very common | Common, early in the disease |
| Sneezing | Sometimes | Common | Common, early in the disease |
| Sore throat | Common | Common | Uncommon |

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| C O U G H | Character | Non-productive ("dry") cough is typical | Hacking cough, often productive; usually responds to cough medications | Coughing fits/paroxysms and nocturnal cough are common; often leads to vomiting or gagging; generally not responsive to cough medications; "whooping" may or may not occur |
| | Severity | Moderate | Mild to moderate | Variable; mild to severe; infants appear quite ill and may present with cough or apnea |
| | Duration | Typically 3-7 days; occasionally to 14 days | Typically 3-7 days | Persistent cough, almost always >1 week, usually 2-6 weeks, sometimes 10+ weeks |
| | Paroxysms | Uncommon | Rare | Coughing fits are common; often leads to vomiting or gagging |

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|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Infectious Period | 1 day before symptom onset and 3-7 days after | Variable; typically 4-7 days after symptom onset; can be longer | From start of catarrhal phase (before cough onset) to 21 days after cough onset*; Most efficient spreading after cough onset |
| Incubation Period | 1-5 days | 1-4 days | 6-20 days |

*or until taking 5 days of appropriate anti-pertussis antibiotics, or until a nasopharyngeal pertussis PCR is negative