



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Cold & Flu

Knowing whether or not you have a cold or the flu and what to do about your symptoms can sometimes feel difficult. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Antiviral Medication	A type of prescription medicine that may be used to treat the flu.
Antibiotics	Prescription medicine used to treat bacterial infections. They do not treat viruses such as colds and the flu.
Incubation Period	The time between exposure to a virus, bacteria, or other germ and the time that symptoms start.
Contagious Period	The time during which an illness may spread from one person to another.
Flu Season	The time period during which the flu circulates in a community at a higher than usual rate.
Influenza A	The most common type of "the flu" in humans, which causes the most illness, hospitalizations, and deaths.
Influenza B	The second most common type of "the flu." Typically causes more illness later in flu season and less likely to be severe.



Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your cold or flu.

About Symptoms

- How long should I expect these symptoms to last?
- Are there any symptoms that I should call about or that aren't normal for people with the flu or a cold?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- What can I do to prevent this in the future?
- What should I watch for to know if it has come back?
- Should I be concerned if I get a cold or the flu again?

About Diagnosis

- How do you know I have a cold/the flu?
- If an in-office flu test was done, do we know which type of influenza it is?
- Is there any reason further testing would be needed?

About Treatment

- Will antiviral medications help me?
- If I live with someone at high risk for complications, should they take antiviral medicine if I have the flu?
- Is there anything I can do to feel better that doesn't involve taking medicine?

About Coping

- What can I do to relieve the symptoms of my cold/flu until it goes away?
- How long should I expect to be sick?
- How long should I stay home from school/work?
- Am I contagious? If so, for how long?
- Should I avoid any specific activities while I'm sick? Can I still go to the gym, grocery store, etc.?
- Is it OK to eat or drink (insert favorite food/drinks here) while I'm sick with a cold or the flu?
