



BREATHE WELL LIVE WELL

Is it a COLD? Or is it ALLERGIES?

Cold and allergy symptoms overlap quite a bit. The most important difference is that colds usually don't last longer than 14 days. If you still have symptoms after two weeks, see your doctor as you may be experiencing allergy symptoms or a more serious health problem.

Symptom/Characteristic	Cold	Allergy
Duration	3-14 days	Days to months
Time of Year	Mostly winter, possible any time	Any time- some are seasonal
Onset of symptoms	Days after exposure to virus	Soon after exposure to the allergen
Cough	Often	Sometimes
Aches	Sometimes	Never
Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes
Fever	Rarely	Never
Itchy, watery eyes	Rarely	Often
Sore throat	Often	Sometimes
Runny or stuffy nose	Often	Often

CONTROL ALLERGY SYMPTOMS BETTER •shower/bathe and wash your hair before bed to remove allergens •wash bed linens, blankets, throws and pillows in hot water to kill dust mites • use light and breezy window treatments • de-clutter and dust/ vacuum often •don't allow pets in the bedroom or on furniture- dander is a common allergen • check local pollen and pollution levels and plan outdoor activity accordingly • use HEPA filters • avoid triggers

ASTHMA is a lung disease causing inflammation and narrowing of the airways making it difficult to breathe. Follow doctors' orders to treat symptoms and avoid a life-threatening asthma attack. Asthma symptoms include wheezing, shortness of breath, tightness in the chest and coughing. Sometime the symptoms are mild and go away on their own or with minimal asthma medication. When symptoms continue to get worse, more intense or additional symptoms appear, this is called an **ASTHMA ATTACK**. An **ASTHMA ATTACK** is very serious and may require emergency care. It's most important to treat asthma symptoms early to prevent them from getting worse and causing a life threatening asthma attack. **CAN ASTHMA BE PREVENTED?** You can't prevent asthma, however, you can take steps to control it and prevent its symptoms. Learn about your asthma and ways to control it. Follow your written [Asthma Action Plan](#) •Use medicines as your doctor prescribes •Identify and avoid things that make your asthma worse •Keep track of your asthma symptoms and level of control •Get regular checkups

ASTHMA TRIGGERS include •Pollen •Bugs in the home •Chemical fumes •Cold Air •Fungus spores •Dust •Smoke •Strong odors •Pollution•Anger•Stress•Pets•Exercise

COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema and often is not diagnosed until the disease is very advanced. The primary symptom of COPD is breathing difficulty. The best way to prevent COPD is to not smoke and limit exposure to second hand smoke, dust, chemical fumes and pollution .

Those with asthma or COPD who participate in the state's health insurance plan may choose to be part of an incentive program. Call **1-866-938-0349** to enroll and manage your health better while you save money!

Visit www.CommonHealth.Virginia.Gov for more information

