

Cold or Allergy?

Wondering if your child has a cold or allergies? Here are a few ways to tell:

| Allergy | Cold |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Multiple Sneezes | One or two sneezes at a time |
| Itchy nose, ears or mouth | No itchy sensation |
| Thin and colorless nasal secretions | Thick and opaque nasal secretions |
| Last “forever” | Usually last 10-14 days |
| Dark circles under the eyes | |

Other signs of having allergic rhinitis include the '**allergic salute**,' a common habit of children which consists of rubbing their nose upward. This is usually because the nose is itchy and this practice can lead to a small crease in the skin of the lower part of the nose.

Allergy symptoms usually occur during certain times of the year for children with **seasonal allergies**, corresponding to being exposed to outdoor allergens, such as tree pollens, grasses and weeds. Children may also have **perennial allergies**, with problems occurring year round from exposure to indoor allergens, such as dust mites, pets, second hand smoke and molds.

If you think your child is suffering from allergies and not a cold, see your pediatrician. There are many things that your pediatrician can recommend that may help relieve your child's suffering.

If it's a cold, the best advice is to drink lots of fluids and to wash those hands. In fact the best prevention for any cold or virus is to wash your hands. A good rule of thumb for hand washing is to put the soap on and then lather the soap up with little or no water and silently sing the ABC song. Make sure the soap gets between your child's fingers, under his/her nails and covers the whole hand. When you finish singing the song, it's time to rinse. Many studies say that this is the only way to truly clean your hands, the quick once over won't help much at all.