

The UConn Buzz



COLD, FLU, & ALLERGIES

'Tis the season for sneezing, sniffles, coughing and sore throats. Cold, flu, and allergy all affect your respiratory system, which can make it hard to breathe. Each condition has key symptoms that set them apart.

Colds and **flu** are caused by different viruses. "As a rule of thumb, the symptoms associated with the flu are more severe," says Dr. Teresa Hauguel, an expert on infectious diseases that affect breathing. Both illnesses can lead to a runny, stuffy nose; congestion; cough; and sore throat. But the flu can also cause high fever that lasts for 3-4 days, along with a headache, fatigue, and general aches and pain. These symptoms are less common when you have a cold.

"Allergies are a little different, because they aren't caused by a virus," Hauguel explains. "Instead, it's your body's immune system reacting to a trigger, or allergen, which is something you're allergic to." If you have allergies and breathe in things like pollen or pet dander, the immune cells in your nose and airways may overreact to these harmless substances. Your delicate respiratory tissues may then swell & your nose may become stuffed up or runny. "Allergies can also cause itchy, watery eyes, which you don't normally have with a cold or flu," Hauguel adds.

Allergy symptoms usually last as long as you're exposed to the allergen, which may be about 6 weeks during pollen seasons in the autumn, spring, or summer. Colds and flu rarely last beyond 2 weeks. Most people with a cold or flu recover on their own without

medical care. But check with a health care provider if symptoms last beyond 10 days, or if symptoms aren't relieved by over-the-counter medicines.

To treat colds or flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. If you have the flu, pain relievers such as aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen can reduce fever and aches. Allergies can be treated with antihistamines or decongestants.

Treatment depends on which you have. A health professional can help you choose what might be best treatment.

Common Cold

- Symptoms last up to 2 weeks
- Stuffy, runny nose; sore throat; cough
- Treated with rest, fluids, over-the-counter (OTC) medicines to ease symptoms

Seasonal Flu

- Symptoms usually last 1-2 weeks
- High fever (100-102 °F, or higher in children), headache, aches and pains, weakness, exhaustion, cough, chest discomfort
- Treated with rest, fluids, OTC medicines, prescription antiviral drugs

Allergy

- Lasts as long as allergens (such as pollen, pet dander) are present
- Stuffy, runny nose; itchy, watery eyes
- Treated with antihistamines, decongestants, nasal steroids

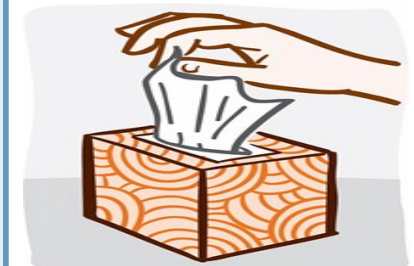
Be careful to avoid drug overlap when taking medicines that list 2 or more active ingredients on the label. For

example, if you take 2 different drugs that contain acetaminophen—one for a stuffy nose and the other for headache—you may be getting too much acetaminophen.

"Read medicine labels carefully; the warnings, side effects and dosages. If you have questions, talk to your doctor or pharmacist, especially if you have kids who are sick," Hauguel says. "You don't want to overmedicate & you don't want to risk taking a medication that may interact with another."

Prevention is the best medicine. Here are some simple tips to help keep you healthy this season.

- [Wash your hands often](#)
- Avoid contact with anyone that has a cold or the flu
- If you are sick avoid public places
- Get the flu vaccine each year
- Cover your nose & mouth when you sneeze
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects



HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

[Join the treasure hunt for CT's healthiest stream](#) Sunday, November 4th at 10am in Bolton.

Volunteers will search for insects, worms and other small animals that live in riffles, or areas of moving water. The variety and numbers of animals found will indicate the relative cleanliness and health of the river system. Participants should bring knee high boots or waders, and may wish to bring waterproof gloves. FREE PIZZA will be provided. Pre-registration required. To register contact Rod Parlee, BCC Chair at Town Hall, 860-649-8066 extension 6110, leave message or e-mail TOBCC@aol.com

[A Colonial Connecticut Thanksgiving \(1786\)](#) - Saturday, November 10th, The Huntington Homestead, 36 Huntington Rd (Rt 14) Scotland. Traditional food dishes will be discussed, such as pompon pie. \$4 per person, children 12 and under free, members free.

[Connecticut Veterans Patriot Race](#) - Saturday, November 10th at 9:30 am, at Patriots Park, Coventry. Fun and motivating event to recognize and honor our brave men & women who have served.

[50th Year of Worldfest](#) - Sunday, November 11th, from 1-4pm in the Student Union ballroom. International Student & Scholar Services (ISSS) & the Worldfest Planning Committee invite community members, families, and students to experience annual event to celebrate international student diversity through performance, food, and activities.

[Walk for Warmth](#) - Sunday, November 18th at 1:00pm, at St. Joseph's Church Willimantic. Individuals and groups are encouraged to Walk for Warmth to raise funds for WAIM's Energy Assistance Program.



Sweet Potato Minestrone

INGREDIENTS

- ◆ 2 large carrots, sliced thin
- ◆ 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled & diced
- ◆ 1 large onion, chopped
- ◆ 2 large stalks celery, chopped
- ◆ 2 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- ◆ salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ 5 cloves garlic, minced
- ◆ 1 (28 oz) can Italian-style diced tomatoes
- ◆ 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ◆ 6 oz green beans, cut into 1 inch pieces
- ◆ 5 cups vegetable broth



DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a soup pot over medium-high heat. Sauté onion, celery, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper until tender, about 5 minutes.
2. Stir in tomatoes, with the juice, broth, sweet potatoes, carrots, green beans and garlic. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low & simmer, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.

Food Allergies During The Holidays

In recent decades the prevalence of food allergy has been increasing.

[According to the CDC](#) "Food allergies are a growing food safety and public health concern that affect an estimated 4%-6% of children in the United States."

[National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease](#) states that a food allergy occurs when the body has a specific and reproducible immune response to certain foods. The body's immune response can be severe and life threatening, such as anaphylaxis. Eight foods or food groups account for 90% of serious allergic reactions in the United States: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, wheat, soy, peanuts, and tree nuts.

For those living with food allergies, the upcoming holiday season can be much spookier than Halloween. With potentially life threatening consequences, it is

important for those living with food allergies to be prepared. Food Allergy Research and Education (FARE) has some excellent recommendations and tips for the holiday eating season.

The easiest way to be in complete control of the holiday food is by hosting yourself. As a host, you can create a menu that suits your dietary restrictions and prevents any chance of cross-contact because you are using your own kitchen.

- If you're a guest, call the host or hostess in advance to ask about the menu and food preparation.
- Offer to bring a dish, and make it an allergen-friendly dish that can suffice as a main course in case you or your family member with a food allergy cannot eat any of the other dishes being served.

- If you have a child with a food allergy, give them a refresher talk about not eating food that may be at risk for cross-contact.
- Don't assume that a food contains only traditional ingredients that you know are safe.

For more tips on food allergy issues, visit foodallergy.org.

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from the CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

