upper respiratory disorders
symptoms comparison

Legend: 🟧 = Characteristic symptom · 🟩 = Symptom present in some patients

symptom	common cold	influenza	RSV	COVID-19	pharyngitis (sore throat)	allergic rhinitis (allergies)
Sudden symptom onset		🟧				
Tearing eyes						🟧
Clogged ears	🟩					🟩
Nasal congestion	🟧		🟧	🟩		🟩
Runny nose	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟩		🟧
Sneezing	🟧	🟧				🟧
Postnasal drip	🟩					
Cough*	🟩	🟧	🟩	🟧		🟩
Sore throat	🟩	🟧	🟧	🟩	🟧	🟩
Swollen lymph nodes (neck)				🟩	🟩	
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing		🟧	🟩			
Headache	🟩	🟧	🟧	🟩	🟩	🟩
Body ache	🟩	🟧		🟩		
Chills		🟧				
Fatigue*		🟧		🟩		
Nausea/vomiting		🟧		🟩		
Fever†	🟩	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟩	
Itching (may be anywhere)						🟧
Diarrhea				🟩		
Loss of taste or smell				🟩		
Possible complications	Ear infection Pneumonia Sinusitis	Pneumonia Encephalitis Meningitis Seizures	Bronchiolitis Pneumonia Respiratory failure	Pneumonia ARDS Respiratory failure Septic shock	Ear infection Mastoiditis Sinusitis Peritonsillar abscess	

key

ARDS = Acute respiratory distress syndrome

COVID-19 = Coronavirus disease 2019

🟧 Characteristic symptom

🟩 Symptom present in some patients

* Cough and fatigue associated with influenza may persist for weeks

† Fever associated with the common cold and fever is usually low-grade (100–102°F) and limited to children; fever associated with influenza is usually severe (102–106°F) and present in both adults and children

disclaimer: Symptoms and signs alone or in combination are not always sufficient to distinguish among pathogens and the illnesses that they cause.

references

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