

Runny Nose Symptom Sorter and Nasal Rinse Safety Card

FitInFlow.space · For information only, not medical advice. Based on CDC, NHS and FDA guidance. Updated October 2026.

1. Which one is it?

	Common cold	Allergy (hay fever)	Sinus infection
Onset	Builds over 2-3 days	Minutes after exposure	Often after a cold
Key signs	Sore throat, cough, tiredness	Sneezing, itchy nose and eyes	Facial pain or pressure, thick discharge
Fever	Sometimes, usually low	No	Possible
Usual length	About 1-2 weeks	While exposure lasts	Doctor if over 10 days

2. See a doctor if

- ☐ Fever over 3 days, or very high
- ☐ Shortness of breath or chest pain
- ☐ Severe headache or facial pain
- ☐ Worse again after starting to improve
- ☐ No improvement after 10 days
- ☐ Long-term condition or weakened immune system
- ☐ Any worry about a baby or young child, especially poor feeding

3. Safe water for nasal rinses (FDA)

- ☐ Distilled or sterile water, OR tap water boiled 3-5 minutes and cooled to lukewarm
- ☐ Boiled water stored in a clean closed container, used within 24 hours
- ☐ NEVER plain tap water
- ☐ Wash and dry the bottle or neti pot after every use
- ☐ Children: only if a pediatrician recommends it

4. Nasal spray and medicine rules (NHS)

Decongestant sprays: no longer than about a week, or the blockage can rebound.
Decongestants: not for children under 6. Aspirin: not for under-16s. Honey: never under 1 year.
Antibiotics do not help colds. Ask a pharmacist before any over-the-counter medicine.

5. Allergy trigger checklist

- ☐ Check daily pollen counts
- ☐ Sunglasses outdoors on high-pollen days
- ☐ Wash bedding hot every week
- ☐ Keep pets out of the bedroom
- ☐ Vacuum with a HEPA filter, dust with a damp cloth
- ☐ Keep rooms dry and ventilated

My symptoms started on: _____ Day 10 falls on: _____

No homeopathic product has been shown to treat colds or allergies (Cochrane 2018; NCCIH). This card contains no remedies or doses.