It can be easy to confuse allergies with a cold since they share some of the same symptoms. However they are very different conditions and need to be diagnosed correctly to determine the right course of treatment.

Common colds are caused by viruses, while seasonal allergies are immune system responses triggered by exposure to allergens.

Treatment of a common cold may include rest, pain relievers and over-the-counter cold remedies, such as decongestants. A cold usually goes away on its own after three to 10 days, although some may last as long as two weeks.

Treatment of seasonal allergies may include over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines, nasal steroid sprays and decongestants, and avoidance of exposure to allergens where possible. Seasonal allergies may last several weeks and recur at the same time each year.

Some symptoms that both colds and allergies have in common are a runny nose, congestion, sneezing, fatigue/weakness, coughing, and sore/scratchy throat.

Some additional symptoms that would indicate seasonal allergies include:

• Watery, itchy eyes
• Itchy ears, throat and roof of mouth
• Wheezing
• Thin, clear nasal discharge

Some additional symptoms that would indicate a cold include:

• Fever
• Chills
• General body aches and pain
• Green or yellow nasal discharge

If your symptoms do not clear up after 2 weeks, or become recurrent, consult your doctor for a definitive diagnosis and to rule out any other health conditions.