

Summer is a hot season for colds

By Angela Chen, Wall Street Journal

Something summery may be lingering even as the season fades – the summer cold.

Colds in summertime can last for weeks, at times seemingly going away and then suddenly storming back with a vengeance, infectious-disease experts say. A winter cold, by contrast, is typically gone in a few days.

The reason for the difference: Summer colds are caused by different viruses from the ones that bring on sniffing and sneezing in the colder months. And some of the things people commonly do in the summer can prolong the illness, like being physically active and going in and out of air-conditioned buildings.

“A winter cold is nasty, brutish and short,” says Bruce Hirsch, infectious-disease specialist at North Shore University Hospital in Manhasset, N.Y. “But summer colds tend to linger. They can go on for weeks and reoccur.”

Summer colds, which can hit between June and October, occur only about 25 percent as often as the winter variety. But summer colds can have more severe, flu-like symptoms, in addition to sneezing and coughing. Many people also mistake a summer cold for allergies, because it just doesn't seem to leave.

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