

COUGH

Patient Information Sheet

Causes of common cough/chest cold

- Viruses (influenza, parainfluenza, rhinovirus and adenovirus are some common causes)
- Post nasal drip
- Asthma/reactive airway disease
- Air pollution
- Pertussis

Duration of common cough/chest cold

Symptoms can commonly last for 10–24 days.

See a health care provider for:

- Temperature higher than 104° F;
- A chronic heart or lung problem;
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing;
- Face or lips turning blue; or
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks.

If your child is younger than three months and has a fever over 100.4° F, call your provider right away.

Treatment

Antibiotics will rarely be needed since acute cough, chest cold and bronchitis are almost always caused by a virus, and chronic bronchitis requires other therapies. If your provider diagnoses you or your child with pneumonia or whooping cough, antibiotics will most likely be prescribed.

How to feel better

- Get plenty of rest;
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially warm fluids;
- 1 tsp of honey (in children over one year of age) can be used as a cough syrup to thin secretions and loosen the cough;
- Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen to relieve pain or fever. (Check with your provider or pharmacist about which medications are safe for infants and children;)
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer or breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or shower;
- Avoid smoking, secondhand smoke and other air pollutants; and
- Use lozenges (age 6 years and up).



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