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.

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).

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