



Self-care Information

Coughs

Treating a cough - Tips for adults and children

“Supporting you to look after you and your family”

- Rest as much as you can.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Have a steamy shower.
- Most coughs will clear up on their own within 3-4 weeks.

Visit your local pharmacy for advice on over the counter medicines.

In most cases you can treat a cough without seeing your GP

- You can buy cough medicines for adults and children from pharmacies or supermarkets. There is little evidence to say whether over the counter medicines are effective for relieving cough symptoms, however you may feel you get some benefit from them. Speak to your pharmacist for advice.

Did you know?

Most coughs do not need to be treated with antibiotics. The vast majority of coughs are caused by viruses - antibiotics have no effect on viruses.

- **Ask your pharmacist which treatment to buy for a child, some treatments are not suitable for younger children.**
- **Ask your pharmacist which treatment to buy if you are pregnant or breastfeeding.**

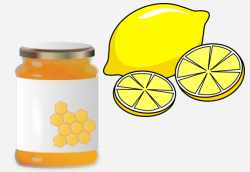


Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.

What else can I do to treat my cough?

You could try

- ✓ Resting. Avoid doing things that worsen your cough.
- ✓ Stay at home if you do not feel well enough to do normal activities.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of fluids.
- ✓ Drink hot lemon and honey; just add freshly squeezed juice from half a lemon and a teaspoon of honey to a mug of hot water (not suitable for babies under 1 years old). This has a similar effect to cough medicines.
- ✓ Paracetamol or ibuprofen to treat any pain.
- ✓ A steamy shower.
- ✓ Use tissues when you cough to prevent germs from spreading.
- ✓ Wash your hands often.



Try not to

- ✗ Try not to smoke. Cutting back the amount you smoke or stopping smoking altogether can help improve a cough and benefit your health overall.



See your GP or call 111 if:

- You've had a cough for more than 3 weeks and it is not improving.
- You have chest pain.
- You feel very unwell.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You find it hard to breathe.
- You're losing weight for no reason.
- The side of your neck feels swollen and painful.
- A child is more lethargic and/or breathing quicker than usual.

Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough/
Patient Website	https://patient.info/chest-lungs/cough-leaflet
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	

