



What is a cough?

A cough is your body's way of clearing your airways of mucus, dust or smoke. Coughs don't usually need treatment.

Coughs can be worse at night. Coughing does not damage your lungs.



What causes a cough?

Most people with a short-term cough have a virus.

Coughs can sometimes be caused by other factors like asthma.

If you smoke, it will help with your cough and breathing if you stop.



How should I treat my cough?

Have a warm drink with honey and lemon in it.

Cough medicines won't make your cough get better any quicker, so they are not provided as part of the Pharmacy First service.



Children and babies with a cough

Don't give over-the-counter cough and cold medicines to children under the age of 6.

Give your child lots of drinks. If they are over the age of one, you could give them a warm drink of lemon and honey.

You can give paracetamol or ibuprofen to children, if needed, for fever and pain.



When should you (or your child) go to your GP practice or contact NHS 111?

See your GP if your cough lasts or more than three weeks or keeps getting worse.

If you are finding hard to breathe, have chest pain or you cough up blood, see a medical professional straight away.



Antibiotics

Coughs and colds are caused by viruses. Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses, so they won't cure your cough.

If you get an infection caused by bacteria, like pneumonia, you may be given antibiotics if you need them.

More information can be found at www.nhs.uk/conditions/cough