

NEWLY DIAGNOSED WITH CHRONIC COUGH?

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?



WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CHRONIC COUGH?

Coughing is usually a good thing - because your body protects itself from irritants getting into your lungs. But sometimes a cough may not stop, and it can become a chronic cough.

When does it become a chronic cough? If your cough lasts longer than eight weeks for adults or longer than four weeks in a child. Doctors can work with you to try to find the cause.

A chronic refractory cough is when doctors can't find the cause of your cough, even after a detailed exam and trying different treatments.



WHAT ARE POSSIBLE CAUSES OF CHRONIC COUGH?

A chronic cough can be caused by:

- COPD
- asthma
- respiratory infections
- postnasal drip
- acid reflux
- angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors
- heart failure
- tobacco or vaping smoke
- other airway irritants

Less common causes are cancer, pneumonia, or rare lung conditions.



WHAT PROBLEMS DOES CHRONIC COUGH CAUSE?



Chronic cough can interrupt your sleep and cause:

- headaches
- dizziness or fainting
- daytime fatigue
- problems concentrating
- mood swings
- a drop in your work or school performance
- loss of bladder control
- pulled rib muscles or broken ribs

That combination of problems can lead to depression, anxiety, high-stress levels, and a drop in self-confidence.

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HOW DO YOU TREAT AND MANAGE CHRONIC COUGH?

If your doctor can find a diagnosis, they can start your treatment right away. They can prescribe medicine, nasal sprays, and inhalers. Let your doctor know if you feel like the medicine is helping. If it doesn't, and the cough still won't go away, they may need to change your medicine.



If there are things around you making you cough (such as tobacco smoke, chemicals, or dust) try to avoid them if possible. This can be hard to do if you are exposed to irritants at your job.



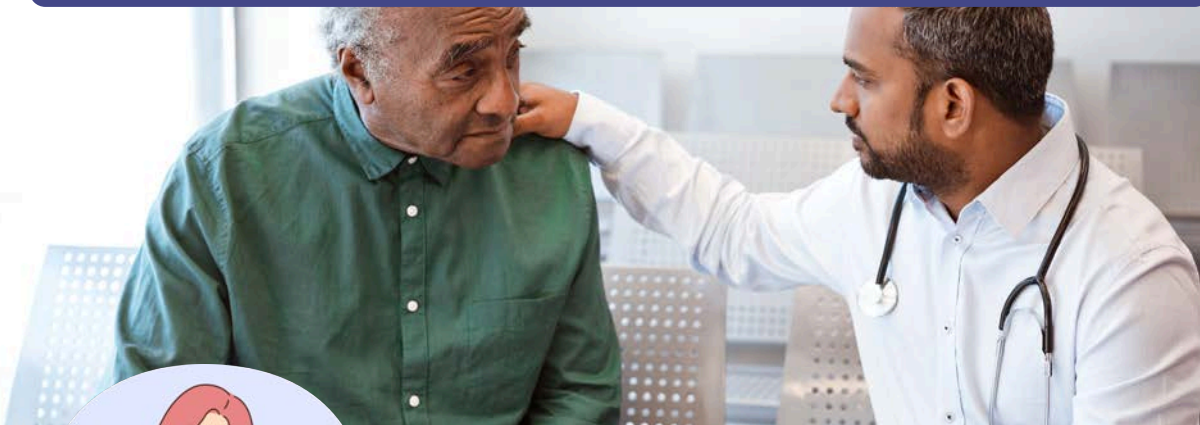
Drinking fluids can help thin the mucus in your lungs, so remember to drink enough throughout the day. If the air is dry where you live, try a humidifier near your desk or bed. Remember to keep your humidifier clean so it doesn't build up mold or mildew.

Coughing can be more bothersome if your throat is irritated. Some people find lozenges or hard candy can help soothe their throat. Tea with honey can also help but remember – don't give honey to babies under 1 year of age.



➔ If the doctor can't find a diagnosis for your cough, it could have turned into a habit. This can be caused by a sensitive throat. Sometimes a speech therapist can help you break a habit you may not even realize you have.

➔ If your primary care provider cannot successfully treat your chronic cough, referral to a specialist such as a pulmonologist should be considered. Referral to a chronic cough specialty center may be an option if a specialist is having difficulty addressing your cough.



CLOSING THOUGHT

Remember to check with your doctor to let them know if you are still struggling with chronic cough. There may be other treatments to help you have a better quality of life.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- To learn more, visit [Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform](#)
- Pause your cough <https://pauseyourcough.com/>