World Chronic Cough Day

Newly Diagnosed with Chronic Cough?

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CHRONIC COUGH?

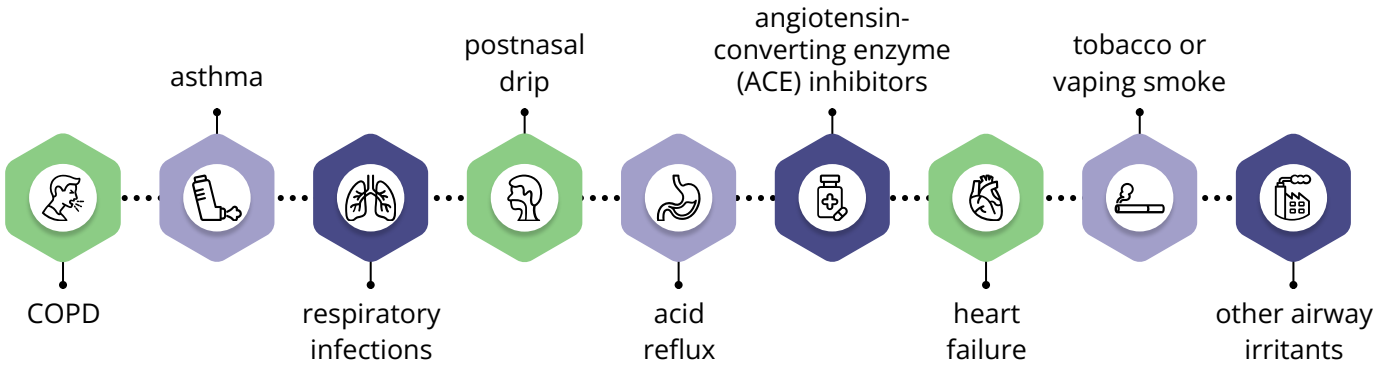
Coughing is usually a good thing - because your body protects itself from irritants getting into your lungs. But sometimes a cough may not stop, and it can become a chronic cough.

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.

An unexplained chronic 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 may happen as its own separate condition or be related to another health condition such as:

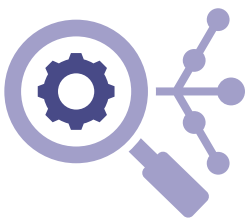


Less common causes are cancer, pneumonia, or and rare lung conditions such as idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) and non-IPF interstitial lung disease (non-IPF ILD).

WHAT PROBLEMS DOES CHRONIC COUGH CAUSE?

Chronic cough can interrupt your sleep and cause poor quality of life.

- 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.

HOW DO YOU TREAT AND MANAGE CHRONIC COUGH?

If your doctor can find out what's causing your cough 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 your doctor can't find a clear medical reason for your cough, it may be linked to sensitive nerves in the airway that keep triggering the cough reflex. Over time, this can feel like a cycle or habit you can't break. A speech and language therapist can teach special techniques to calm the throat and reduce coughing, even if you don't realize you're doing it.

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 see if there is a specialist in your country who can treat chronic cough, scroll through the link of member organizations on our website **gaapp.org/about/member-organizations**
- To learn more about chronic cough, visit **Global Allergy & Airways Patient Platform**
- You can also visit Pause your Cough **pauseyourcough.com**

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GLOBAL ALLERGY & AIRWAYS PATIENT PLATFORM