

A cough on it's own is common and rarely serious



Most short term coughs are due to a viral infection and will usually disappear within 3 weeks. Coughing is often associated with cold viruses because mucus trickles down the back of the throat and causes irritation. Coughing helps the child to clear the mucus away, and although simple treatments like cough medicines can help a cough there is no need to suppress the cough completely.

There is no evidence that cough suppressants with active ingredients such as decongestants are any more effective than simple remedies. Only children over six years of age should be given these, and the dosage instructions should be followed carefully (do not mix brands).

Antibiotics do not work for viral infections.

A warm, humid atmosphere may help - try damp towels on radiators. Your child should not be in a smoky atmosphere. Encourage your child not to infect others by using a handkerchief and washing hands regularly.

Looking after your child at home

Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids - small sips of warm drinks are as effective as cough medicines and safer.

You do not need to keep your child off school with a cough.

Simple remedies such as Paracetamol, a warm/humid atmosphere or simple children's cough syrup with Glycerol or honey and lemon (but not a cough suppressant) may help to make your child feel more comfortable - ask your Pharmacist about this. Vapour rubs and decongestants applied to clothing are also safe.



For more information, help and support go to www.choosewellmanchester.org.uk or visit NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk

Choose the right care



What to do next...



Choose care at home if...

- Your child has had a fever of 38.3°C (101°F) for less than three days
- The cough seems to be caused by exercise
- There is occasional mild chest discomfort and deep coughing with lots of phlegm



Choose your GP or GP out-of-hours service if...

- Your child has had an injury to their chest in the last 48 hours
- Your child has a history of blood clots
- Your child is coughing up blood
- Your child has been coughing up green or brown phlegm for more than three days
- Your child has a persistent 'barking' cough
- Your child has had a fever for more than three days



Call 999 A&E if...

- Your child is choking on something
- Your child cannot breathe
- Their lips or tongue turn blue
- Your child coughs up pink frothy phlegm
- There is any sudden shortness of breath or rapid breathing
- Your child has chest pain



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