

Cough Confusion?



A guide to help you choose the right treatment for your cough.

This guide is for adults with a cough caused by a cold or flu that lasts no more than three weeks. It does not cover every situation. If you are unsure about which medication to take, please speak to your pharmacist before making a purchase.

Dry / Tickly Cough

Symptoms

- No mucus
- Tickly feeling in the throat or chest
- Stubborn, persistent
- Usually worse during the day

Causes

- Cold
- Flu
- Cold or dry air
- Allergies or irritants
- Other more serious illnesses*

Treatment

Cough suppressants to help you stop coughing - an example of this is **Dextrometorphan**

Demulcements to help soothe the throat and ease the cough- an example of this is **Glycerol**

Chesty Cough

Symptoms

- Coughing up mucus
- A 'wet' sound from mucus in your airway
- Usually worse in the morning

Causes

- Cold
- Flu
- Other more serious illnesses*

Treatment

Expectorants to help you thin mucus making it easier to cough up and clear your airways - an example of this is **Guaifenesin**

Antihistamines to help reduce congestion and decrease the amount of mucus or phlegm made by the lungs- an example of this is **Diphenhydramine**.

Things you can do to help your cough

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids
- Take over the counter painkillers if needed
- Take Vitamin C to boost your immune system
- Steam inhalation (for dry coughs)
- Gargle warm salt water to clear viruses and bacteria from your throat

*When to see your doctor

- If you are coughing up blood - seek immediate medical advice
- If you think your cough is caused by anything other than cold or flu
- If you are taking any other medicines (speak to your pharmacist)
- You have had a cough for over 3 weeks
- You are wheezing or struggling to breathe
- You have neck or chest pain
- You have lost a lot of weight in a short period of time
- You have a weakened immune system