

Megan Dinh, M.D.
Joseph Dorfman, M.D.
William Giasi, M.D.
Robert F. Helmrich, M.D.
Payal Hemrajani, M.D.
Valerie Kullmann, M.D.
Bert Mandelbaum, M.D.
Rebecca Marshall, M.D.
Joelle McConlogue, M.D.
Adam Naddelman, M.D.
D. Shawn Pierson, M.D.
J. Dean Pierson, M.D.
Gerald M. Raymond, M.D.
Allen J. Schneider, M.D.
Priya Stephen, M.D.

Princeton Nassau Pediatrics, P. A.

Princeton Shopping Center
301 North Harrison Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540
609-924-5510

196 Princeton Hightstown Road, West Windsor, New Jersey 08540
609-799-5335

COUGH

Definition

A cough is the sudden forcing of air and mucus out of the lungs.

Causes

Most coughs are caused by a viral infection of the upper airway and windpipe.

How to Treat a Cough

1. Reassurance: A wet cough is good because it helps to get infected fluid out of the lungs. A dry cough is not helpful and can be reduced by soothing the irritated throat.

2. Homemade cough medicines to remove the throat irritation or tickle:

- **Honey:** Give 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of honey as often as needed. Avoid honey under 1 year old. If honey is not available, you can use corn syrup.
- **Cough drops:** Children over 6 years old can usually control coughing by sucking on cough drops. If cough drops are not available, you can use hard candy.
- **Warm liquids:** Warm liquids such as warm apple juice relax the airway and loosen up the mucus. (Avoid if your child is under 4 months old.)

3. Drugstore cough medicines: Cough and cold medicines are not as helpful as honey. Also, they are not approved for children under 4 years old.

4. Humidifier: Use a humidifier if the air in your home is dry.

5. Avoid tobacco smoke: It can make a cough last weeks longer.

6. Expected course: A cough normally lasts 2 or 3 weeks.

Call your child's doctor Now (night or day) if:

- Your child looks or acts very sick
- Breathing becomes difficult when not coughing
- Breathing becomes fast when not coughing.

Call your child's doctor during the day if:

- You think your child needs to be seen
- Fever lasts more than 3 days.
- Cough lasts more than 3 weeks.