

COUGH AND BRONCHITIS



What causes cough and bronchitis?

Coughs are one of the most frequent symptoms of childhood illness, and although they can sound awful at times, they usually are not a symptom of a serious condition. In fact, coughing is a healthy and important reflex that helps clear the airways in the throat and chest. Bronchitis is an infection of the bronchial tubes that carry air into the lungs. When these tubes get infected with viruses, swelling occurs.

What are the symptoms?

- Cough that produces mucus - both viral and bacterial infections can cause mucus that is yellow or green in color.
- Shortness of breath worsened by exertion or mild activity
- Wheezing
- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever
- Chest discomfort

How does someone get a cough or bronchitis?

The viruses that cause colds and bronchitis are sprayed into the air, onto people's hands when they cough into their hands, or when they touch something that has virus particles on its surface. Breathing in these viruses may cause someone to get a cold or bronchitis.

How can a cough or bronchitis be prevented?

One of the best ways to keep from getting coughs and bronchitis is to wash your hands often with soap and water to wash off any viruses that may be on your skin.

What is the treatment?

Most colds and bronchitis will go away on their own after several days or a week. Things you can do to make you feel better are:

- Drinking lots of fluids
- Getting plenty of rest
- Taking Tylenol or ibuprofen to relieve muscle aches and fever (DO NOT give children under 12 years of age aspirin)
- Over-the-counter cold medicine
- Using a cool mist humidifier
- Avoiding second-hand cigarette smoke

When should a healthcare provider be called?

A healthcare provider should be called if you have concerns about fever, breathing problems, chest pains or symptoms that do not improve or worsen.