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Patient information

Stop Cough Technique

What is chronic cough?

A chronic cough is a cough that persists for eight weeks or more. Many report it to be a dry cough with an irritation or tickling sensation. This is quite common but it can be distressing. The cough can be triggered by many factors such as talking, laughing, certain smells or sudden changes in temperature.

What causes chronic cough?

- **Post nasal drip:** Excess mucus from the nose/sinuses that drips down the back of the throat and causes an irritation and the feeling of needing to cough and clear this.
- **Reflux:** Acid rises from the stomach up the oesophagus and this can then tip over onto the vocal cords causing an irritation and coughing. Lifestyle or dietary alterations, postural care and medications are the best treatments for this; you may wish to speak to your GP for further advice.
- **Asthma:** Coughing may not happen all the time but it can be triggered by breathing in cold air or certain smells/chemicals.
- **Infections:** A cough can remain following an illness such as a cold.
- **Medications:** Coughing can in some cases be a side effect of some medications. It may be beneficial to discuss with your GP about any possible medication changes.

Common triggers

* Change in air temperature
* Aerosols, sprays, perfumes and cleaning substances
* Pollen and dust

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Putting you first

* Dryness
* Viral infections
* Physical exercise

For many individuals, continuous coughing can worsen your symptoms.

A dry cough is a type of irritation that can be caused by several factors, some of which include the cold, dry or fasting-moving air hitting the throat.

Once you have coughed it is likely that you will feel the need to take a big breath and cough again. By doing this you are effectively "feeding" the cough as each big breath you take will further irritate the lungs and throat and in turn causes a cough.

The stop-cough exercise is designed to help reduce your over-sensitive cough reflex. If you can reduce the air flow and keep the air around the throat warm and moist it is often possible to stop coughing early.

Stop Cough Technique

1. At the first sign of a tickle or as soon as you cough, or feel you are about to cough, put your hand over your mouth.

2. Swallow once.

3. Hold your breath for a few seconds. When you start breathing again take slow, smooth breaths for at least 30 seconds, while keeping your hand over your mouth.

4. Tell yourself that you are not going to cough.

5. Finally, take a smooth, normal-sized breath through your nose and take your hand away from your mouth.

6. If you still feel a tickle in your throat, repeat the exercise from the beginning until the tickle has subsided.

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http://www.disabledgo.com/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust/main

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