

Cough

What is a cough?

A cough is a common symptom of illness. Coughs often sound bad, but keep in mind that coughing is a good reflex that clears out the airways in the lungs and may protect your child from getting pneumonia. Your child may have a dry, hacky type of cough, or have a wet cough with lots of mucus. A continuous cough lasting more than 5 minutes is a coughing spasm.

What is the cause?

Most coughs are a result of a viral infection and most children get viral infections several times a year as part of a cold. These infections are usually not serious. Coughs can also indicate asthma or wheezing (child typically has allergies, is not ill, and has no fever) or coughs occasionally can represent a bacterial infection like pneumonia (child typically will have higher fever and seem more ill with coughs often more productive sounding). Very rare- but important to treat- is whooping cough (Pertussis). Children may not have the classic “whoop” sound on inhale and may just have a very persistent cough that comes in coughing spells that can last a minute or longer.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Medicines to loosen the cough and thin the secretions**

Coughs in children over age 6 years can be controlled by sucking on cough drops or hard candy. The drops coat the irritated throat.

For children over 1 year old; use 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of corn syrup. The syrup thins the secretions and loosens the cough.

For cough spasms: Warm liquids usually relax the airway and loosen up the mucus. Try warm apple juice, or warm herbal tea. (Not for babies less than 4 months old.)

Cough-suppressant medicines

Cough suppressants should not be given to children under 4 years old because they can cause serious side effects.

- **Humidifiers**

Dry air tends to make coughs worse. Either a warm or cool humidifier will work. Keep warm humidifiers out of reach of children. Refresh with clean water daily.

Every 3 days of use, or when putting the machine away, rinse basin with a weak bleach solution, then rinse again. Never run the humidifier with bleach solution

- **Smoking**

Don't let anyone smoke around your child.

When should I call the Doctor

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- Breathing becomes fast or labored (when your child is not coughing).
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Call during office hours if:

The cough lasts more than 2 weeks.

Dr Thomas's Natural treatment recommendations:

Children/s Herbal care products by GAIA

GAIA Cough Syrup for Dry Coughs

Ages 3 to 6 years- ¼ tsp three times daily on an empty stomach.

Ages 7-13 years- ½ tsp three times daily on an empty stomach.

GAIA Cough Syrup for Wet Coughs

Ages 3 to 6 years- ¼ tsp three times daily on an empty stomach.

Ages 7-13 years- ½ tsp three times daily on an empty stomach.

GAIA Warming Vaporous Rub

Rub on chest as directed

Natranix Children's Cough Formula,

Available at our office