

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.

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). A child may or may not have the classic “whoop” sound ***on inhale after a coughing episode***, they may just have a very persistent cough that comes in coughing spells that can last a minute or longer. **A physician should always evaluate bad coughs.**

Medicines to loosen the cough and thin the secretions

For children **over age 6 years**, you can use age appropriate over-the-counter cough medicines or cough drops. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for use. We recommend Elderberry cough syrup.

For children **over 1 year** old: use 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of honey or Elderberry cough syrup. These thin the secretions and loosens a cough. Use age appropriate medications and use as directed.

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

Cough-suppressant medicines **should not be given to children under 4 years old**, because they can cause serious side effects.

Dry air tends to make coughs worse. Use of humidifiers, either warm or cool, may be helpful especially for a dry cough associated with croup (a deep, barking cough). Keep warm humidifiers out of reach of children. Follow manufacturer’s recommendations for use and especially for cleaning.

Do not let anyone smoke around your child.

Call the doctor’s office ***IMMEDIATELY*** if:

- Breathing becomes fast or labored, when your child is not coughing
- If your child starts acting/looking very sick

Call during office hours if:

- The cough lasts more than 2 weeks

Dr Thomas’s natural treatment recommendations:

Natranix Children’s Cough Formula - available at our office