



MEDICAL CONDITIONS

IS THIS CAUSING YOUR COUGH?

Postnasal drip: Nerve endings are tickled by mucous dripping down the back of the throat. This could be the result of allergies or the common cold and can be a wet or dry cough. This cough is worse when you lie down and can be associated with severe itching of the eyes or sneezing.

What to do: Removing the cause of the allergy is best, but an antihistamine or other chronic medication prescribed by your doctor can help.

Asthma: This is typically associated with difficulty breathing and may be associated with wheezing. The airways are inflamed and the chest feels tight, especially at night or after exercising.

What to do: If you have been diagnosed with asthma, be sure to keep your asthma medication on you at all times (such as an asthma pump) to use immediately once symptoms begin.

GERD: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease is a condition in which the upper valve of the stomach doesn't work properly, which can cause heartburn. It's also a common reason for unexplained, chronic coughing, but according to WebMD, the reason why is not clear.

What to do: Speak to your doctor about your treatment options, which usually involves taking chronic medication.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease: This is the most common cause of a nagging, incessant cough. The air sacs in your lungs are inflamed or damaged, which causes the tissue to make more mucous. As a result you are more likely to cough and feel like you're short of breath. One of the biggest risk factors for COPD is smoking.

What to do: In mild cases, treatment is supportive with medication, but in severe cases, you may need additional help from continuous supplemental oxygen or even surgery.

Pneumonia: Caused by a virus (like the cold or flu), bacteria (like strep) or fungus. Pneumonia can be mild or severe enough to land you in hospital. The infection causes fluid or pus to form in the lungs making it hard for you to breathe and get enough oxygen into your tissues.

What to do: In mild cases, treatment is supportive while severe cases are treated in hospital with antibiotics or antivirals and physiotherapy.