

Cough

Coughing is a natural reflex to clear the throat and lungs. Some coughs can be dry and hacky while others can be loose and produce mucus or phlegm. Coughs can also be a symptom of an illness. An irritated airway can be brought on by:

- A cold or flu
- Sinus infection
- Bronchitis
- Allergies
- Heartburn (reflux)
- Asthma
- Smoke or other air pollutants (Pollens)
- More serious illness, such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, heart failure and cancer.
- A cough can also be a side effect from certain medications.

Any cough that lasts several weeks or more is considered chronic. Many smokers may cough every morning upon awakening, and have just gotten used to it, but this could be more serious than they think.

Treatment is determined by the type of cough. Remember to read labels to determine the best medication for you. Choose an expectorant if the cough is loose and produces mucus as this medication will help break up the mucus more and it will be easier to cough it up and out. Choose a suppressant if you have a dry hacky cough. Look for Guaifenesin, this is the generic medication found in such brands as Robitussin or Mucinex

A few other measures you can take include:

- **Stop Smoking** and avoid secondhand smoke
- Do not use Antihistamines for a "wet" cough; they will dry up the mucus making it harder to cough it up.
- Drink plenty of fluids
- **REST**
- A humidifier may moisten dry air but remember to clean it frequently as bacteria love moisture. You may run hot water in the bathroom and sit there for 10-15 minutes for the additional moisture.

You should come to the health center to see a doctor if you have:

- A cough with a fever > 101.5 degrees F (38.6 degrees C)
- Mucus with green or bloody streaks in it.
- A cough that interferes with sleep or your daily routines
- A cough that has not gotten better in more than a week
- A violent cough that comes on suddenly
- A high-pitched sound (wheezing) when you breathe in
- Unexpected weight loss as well as a cough.

You should be seen by a doctor right away if you are having any shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, painful breathing or coughing up blood. Call Security to take you to Urgent Care or ER.