

# Cough

Coughing is an important way to keep your throat and airways clear. However, too much coughing may mean you have a disease or disorder.

Some coughs are dry. Others are considered productive. A productive cough is one that brings up mucus. Mucus is also called phlegm or sputum.

## **Coughs can be either acute or chronic:**

- Acute coughs usually begin suddenly and are often due to a cold, flu or sinus infection. They usually go away after 3 weeks.
- Subacute coughs last 3 to 8 weeks.
- Chronic coughs last longer than 3 weeks.

## **Common Causes:**

- Recent upper airway infections, such as the common cold and flu, can cause coughs. Other common causes include:
- ACE inhibitors (medications used to control blood pressure)
- Allergic rhinosinusitis (inflammation of the nose or sinuses)
- Asthma
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (emphysema or chronic bronchitis)
- Cigarette smoking
- Exposure to secondhand smoke
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Lung disease such as bronchiectasis, interstitial lung disease, or tumors
- Lung infections such as pneumonia or acute bronchitis
- Sinusitis leading to postnasal drip

## **Helpful Suggestions**

- Don't smoke and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- If you have seasonal allergies like hay fever, stay indoors during days when airborne allergens are high. If possible, keep the windows closed and use an air conditioner. Avoid fans that draw in air from outdoors. Shower and change your clothes after being outside.
- If you have allergies year round, cover your pillows and mattress with dust mite covers, use an air purifier, and avoid pets and other triggers.

*\*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.*