

Source: U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

The causes of coughing

It's the season for colds and flu – and that means coughing. Coughing is an important function in your body. It helps clear your airways.

Many times, a mild cough will go away on its own. But when should you see a doctor about a cough?



BRONCHITIS

Bronchitis is an inflammation in the tiny tubes in the lungs. These tubes are called bronchioles. Viruses and bacteria can get into the bronchioles and make you sick. Chemicals and toxins like tobacco smoke can also invade the bronchioles and lead to bronchitis.

Symptoms of bronchitis include:

- Coughing, especially with mucus
- Wheezing or feeling short of breath
- Low fever
- Chest pain

Bronchitis is most often caused by a virus so antibiotics will not help. Rest, drinking more fluids and a humidifier can help you feel better.



PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia is an infection in the air sacs inside the lungs. These sacs are called alveoli. Pneumonia can range from mild to serious. If you have pneumonia, you may notice:

- Cough with greenish, yellow or bloody mucus
- Fever, sweating and chills
- Trouble breathing
- Stabbing chest pain that hurts when you cough or take a deep breath
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling weak or tired
- Nausea and vomiting (common in small children)

Many times, a doctor will give you antibiotics for pneumonia. Be sure to take them exactly as your doctor tells you. Pneumonia can be life-threatening if it is not treated effectively.



PERTUSSIS (WHOOING COUGH)

Pertussis is very contagious. It may seem like a cold at first. People may have a runny nose or mild cough.

As it gets worse, pertussis causes a severe cough that can last weeks or even months. The cough makes a high-pitched “whoop” sound. It's especially dangerous for babies and people with weak immune systems.

The best way to protect against pertussis is to get vaccinated. If you aren't sure whether you're vaccinated, ask your doctor. Pertussis is treated with antibiotics.

COMMON COLD

A common cold may cause some coughing. When you have a runny nose, the fluids drain down your throat. This causes your cough reflex to kick in. It's a way your body protects your lungs. Although a cough from a cold can be annoying, it usually goes away quickly. Antibiotics won't help with a cough related to a cold.



Get to know an AED

Automated external defibrillators help a person who is in cardiac arrest. They can deliver an electric shock to help get the heart beating normally again.

You may have seen AEDs at places like stores, malls, hotels or gyms. Many public places have them and they are usually mounted on a wall.

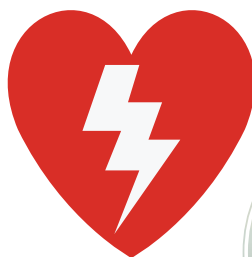


WHEN TO USE ONE

If a person has cardiac arrest, they will be completely unresponsive. If the person cannot talk or wake up, check to see if they are breathing. If they aren't breathing and don't have a pulse, start CPR and ask someone else to get the AED, if possible.

AED

Automated External Defibrillator



WHAT IS CARDIAC ARREST?

Cardiac arrest and a heart attack are not the same thing.

In a heart attack, a blockage stops blood flow to the heart. But with cardiac arrest, the heart's electrical rhythm isn't working properly. The heart stops pumping, or is "arrested." A heart attack can cause cardiac arrest.

WHY SHOULD I LEARN TO USE AN AED?

Sudden cardiac arrest is a major cause of death. An AED is the only way to restore a person's heart rhythm during cardiac arrest. Knowing how to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is also helpful.

You still need to call 911 if someone is in cardiac arrest. But it takes a few minutes for an ambulance to arrive. In those minutes, an AED could be life-saving.

WHAT TO DO

Even if you're not trained, you can use an AED on someone in cardiac arrest. The machine helps guide you along. Here's what to do:

- Call 911 or have someone else call.
- If possible, have someone do chest compressions or CPR while someone else gets the AED ready.
- Turn on the AED.
- Remove clothes from the person's chest. Dry their skin with a cloth if needed.
- Put the pads on the chest as pictured on the pads.
- Do not place AED pads on top of a pace maker.
- First, the AED will measure the person's heart rhythm. Don't touch the person while this happens.
- If the person needs a shock, the AED will tell you.
- The AED will tell you when it gives a shock and what to do next. Stand back while it gives a shock through the pads.

Together, CPR and an AED can save lives.

Sources: American Heart Association, American Red Cross

Go nuts for a healthy heart

Nuts often get a reputation as being unhealthy. We add them to cookies and ice cream. People eat them by the handful at parties. But do nuts deserve a bad rap?

CONCERNS ABOUT CALORIES

For years, many people avoided nuts because they are high in calories and fat. However, newer research finds that nuts can be an important part of a healthy diet. They contain many nutrients needed for body functions.

The key is to eat nuts in moderation. This means you may need to eat smaller portions. Then, you can avoid eating too many calories from nuts.

Look at the serving size on a package of nuts to get an idea of how much to eat. One serving may be quite small (2-4 tablespoons).

SOME FATS ARE HEALTHY

Yes, most nuts are high in total fat. But these fats found in nuts actually promote good health! Most are high in healthy monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats can help lower bad cholesterol, which can lower the risk of heart disease and stroke. The American Heart Association recommends people eat more of these fats from healthy sources like nuts and seeds.

PROTEIN PACKED

Nuts are a good source of plant-based protein. Protein is an essential nutrient that the body needs for building muscle, repairing tissues and making hormones.

It takes longer for the body to digest proteins than carbohydrates. That's why eating some protein could help you feel less hungry than if you ate only carbohydrates, like crackers or bread.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that people eat healthy sources of protein, like those that come from nuts and seeds, and plant foods.

WHICH TYPES TO EAT

Of course, there are many different kinds of nuts. Each type tastes different and may contain a variety of nutrients. As long as you're not coating nuts with sugar and salt, any type can be healthy.

Take a look at your favorite nut's nutrition facts and go from there. For instance, macadamia nuts are one of the highest in calories and fat per ounce. But take those calories into account, and eat them instead of chips or cookies.

Replace unhealthy, processed foods with nuts. You'll get more nutrients and might even feel more full.



Nuts & allergies

Food allergies affect millions of people. With a food allergy, the immune system reacts to the food like it's an invader. It may cause swelling, trouble breathing, hives and itching.

NUT ALLERGY DANGERS

Nut allergies can be life-threatening.

A person who is allergic to nuts could have a reaction from being near someone eating nuts. Even a tiny crumb of nuts left on a table could be life-threatening. This is why many schools do not allow nuts in classrooms or lunchrooms.

If you or your family member has a nut allergy, you can still enjoy some nut alternatives. They can be just as delicious — and nutritious — as nuts.



NUT ALTERNATIVES

Nuts contain plant-based protein, healthy fats and some vitamins and minerals. If you can't eat nuts, don't worry. There are other foods with these benefits!

- **LEGUMES:** Soybeans, peas, lentils and chickpeas are legumes. They can be roasted as a snack or in salads. Some people are allergic to some types of legumes, however. Be sure to ask about legume allergies before using them for passing dishes or at school.



- **SEEDS:** There are so many kinds to choose from, like sunflower, pumpkin, chia, flax and hemp. They go well with salads, in smoothies or as a snack.



- **AVOCADOES:** Although not a significant source of protein, avocados are rich in healthy fats, B vitamins, potassium and magnesium. Avocados can go on many foods, from toast to salads to stir-frys.



NUT-FREE BUTTER OPTIONS



Many nut-free butters make a great sandwich or spread for fruit. They taste a lot like peanut butter but without the peanuts.

Today's nut-free butters may contain soybeans, sunflower seeds, chickpeas or peas. These can all be healthy alternatives to nuts. Most contain some healthy fats and protein. Check the label for added salt or sugar.



THE BOTTOM LINE

Nuts are a healthy choice — and there are allergy-free options available. If you have an allergy to nuts, read all food labels. Look at allergen information and ingredients to stay safe.

Helping teens stay drug-free

Most parents don't want to think about their teen using drugs. They assume their teen is doing OK. They may also think it would be obvious if their teen was into drugs or alcohol.

Unfortunately, even teens with great parents sometimes take risks and make dangerous choices.



WHY DO TEENS TAKE RISKS?

A teen's brain is very sensitive to emotions and doing things that feel good. Plus, their brains aren't fully developed yet.

This means they are not ready to make rational decisions all the time. They may also struggle with mental health issues like depression or anxiety. It can be all too easy to slip into using drugs or alcohol.



WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

A good relationship with your teen is important. This can help them feel they can talk to you about challenges they are facing. This also means they might come to you if they have a problem with drugs or alcohol. Here are some tips to help you stay connected:



- **Be a great listener.** Talk with your teen about their daily life. Give them a chance to express their opinion. Don't interrupt. If they tell you something upsetting, try to remain calm. Ask them how you can help.

- **Help them find activities.** Teens do well if they have an outlet for fun and stress relief. This may be music, sports, religious activities or volunteering.
- **Know your teen's friends.** Encourage your teen and their friends to hang out at your house.
- **Don't solve their problems for them.** Parents want to help their teen when they need it. But it's often more effective to teach them skills to help them solve their own problems. If they have a fight with a friend, talk with them about ways they could work it out themselves. Offer your support but try not to step in.



- **Talk about tough stuff.** Help your teen figure out what to do if they are being pressured into something. Show them that they can turn to you. Do they feel comfortable calling you if they need a ride home from a party? Can they talk to you about peer pressure and drinking?

Beat the *stress cycle*

Eat healthy and exercise. These help your body deal with stress.

Recognize that stress is a normal reaction. You can't always avoid it.

Slow breathing can halt your stress response.

Exercise has been proven to relieve stress and improve your health!

Stress can make life hard. But there are healthy ways to get through it.

When you feel stress coming on, take slow, deep breaths in and out.



WELL-BEING
TIP

Overcoming hoarding disorder

Many people have seen TV shows or articles about hoarding disorder. It's a very real mental disorder that makes it hard for people to throw anything away.

What is hoarding?

When a person has hoarding disorder, things may pile up in their home. This can lead to fire hazards, pests and problems with a job and relationships. Symptoms of hoarding include:

- Not being able to throw anything away
- A strong emotional attachment to everyday household items
- Severe anxiety when trying to throw something away
- Feeling overwhelmed or embarrassed about all the things in their home
- Strong fears about running out of things
- Losing living space because of too many things
- Becoming isolated or losing relationships because of too many items in the house

How is hoarding treated?



The only proven treatment for hoarding disorder is cognitive behavioral therapy. CBT is a type of talk therapy. It helps a person learn how to change their thought patterns and reactions to situations.

Some people with hoarding disorder also get help in support groups. They can connect with others who understand and who are also trying to get better.



Getting help for hoarding disorder

If you think you may have a hoarding disorder, you can seek help from a mental health professional. You can start with your primary care physician.

You can also go to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) resource page at:
www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help.

Sources: American Psychiatric Association, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, National Institutes of Health