

Cough - Allergic

Definition

- Cough caused by pollens or other allergic substances

Health Information

Symptoms

- Lots of coughing
- The cough can be dry (no mucus) or wet (coughing up mucus)
- Mucus often is sticky and causes repeated throat clearing
- A coughing fit or spell is over 5 minutes of nonstop coughing
- Runny nose and watery eyes may also be present
- Allergic symptoms often have a sudden onset

Causes

- Reaction to an inhaled substance (called an allergen). Most often this is a pollen.
- Grass, trees, weeds and molds are the most common pollens.
- Allergens can also be from cats, dogs, horses, rabbits and other animals.
- Dust, chemicals, or pollutants can also cause a cough. This is from irritation of the airway, not an allergic reaction.

Prevention - How to Reduce the Pollen Your Child Breathes

- Pollen is carried in the air.
- Keep windows closed in the home, at least in your child's bedroom.
- Keep windows closed in car. Turn the air conditioner on recirculate.
- Avoid window fans or attic fans. They pull in pollen.
- Try to stay indoors on windy days. Reason: The pollen count is much higher when it's dry and windy.
- Avoid playing with the outdoor dog. Reason: Pollen collects in the fur.
- **Pollen Count.** You can get your daily pollen count from www.pollen.com. Just type in your zip code.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Pollen allergies are very common. They occur in about 15% of children.
- A cough is a common symptom of allergies.
- Symptoms can be controlled by giving allergy medicines. Use either short-acting (Benadryl) or long-acting (Zyrtec).
- Since pollen allergies recur each year, learn to control the symptoms.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. **Allergy Medicine for Allergic Cough:**

- Allergy medicine can bring an allergic cough under control within 1 hour. The same is true for nasal allergy symptoms.
- A short-acting allergy medicine (such as Benadryl) is helpful. No prescription is needed. Age limit: 1 year and older.
- Do not use Benadryl longer than a few days.
- Switch to a long-acting antihistamine, such as Zyrtec. Age limit: 2 years and older.

3. **Homemade Cough Medicine:**

- Goal: Decrease the irritation or tickle in the throat that causes a dry cough. These treatments can be used along with the allergy medicines.
- AGE 1 year and older: Use HONEY ½ to 1 teaspoon (2-5 ml) as needed. It works as a homemade cough medicine. It can thin the secretions and loosen the cough. If you don't have any honey, you can use corn syrup.
- AGE 6 years and older: Use COUGH DROPS to decrease the tickle in the throat. If you don't have any, you can use hard candy.

4. **Coughing Fits or Spells:**

- Give warm clear fluids to drink. Examples are apple juice and lemonade.
- Give an extra dose of Benadryl or CTM to stop the breakthrough symptoms.

5. **Avoid Tobacco Smoke:**

- Tobacco smoke makes coughs much worse.

6. **Wash Pollen Off Body:**

- Remove pollen from the hair and skin with shampoo and a shower. This is really important before bedtime.

7. **What to Expect:**

- Coughing from an allergic substance that can be avoided should go away in hours. Examples are a reaction to pets, a barn, raking leaves or air pollution.
- Coughing during pollen season can last 4-8 weeks. It may return whenever you don't give the allergy medicine. It can flare-up whenever the pollen count goes high.

8. **Return to School:**

- Your child does not need to miss any school for allergies.

Call Your Doctor If

- Trouble breathing or swallowing occurs
- Wheezing occurs
- Coughing is not better in 2 days after starting allergy medicine
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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