



Integrative COUGH Healing Tree

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Coughing is the body's natural method for clearing the airway and trying to expel harmful microbes, dust or irritants. Coughing can rarely be a symptom of an underlying illness such as pneumonia or asthma so you should seek medical care if you have been coughing for more than a week, you are having difficulty breathing, you are wheezing or have a barky cough, turning blue in the lips, lethargic, high fevers above 104, your child is less than 4 months old, or there are other symptoms that you are concerned about.

Most coughs are benign and are symptoms of an upper respiratory virus (URI). The average URI last 3-5 days, with cough, congestion, fevers and feeling mildly ill. It is not uncommon for the cough and congestion to last for weeks or months after your child feels better. You should be examined if the cough is lingering, but you generally do not need medication if your child has a mild cough and congestion, but is otherwise well, afebrile, has a normal activity level and does not seem ill. In these situations, natural remedies are the perfect tools to help try and get your child's body back to 100%.

There are many types of coughs. Dry coughs are usually due to infection, irritants, allergies or asthma. Rattley coughs are usually due to phlegm in the throat and nose. Sometimes young children can swallow the phlegm which irritates the stomach and causes vomiting. Barky coughs are often due to croup.

There are several ways to try to prevent coughs including avoiding cigarette smoke, adequate sleep, minimize stress, avoid sick children, and maintain a healthy diet.

Healing Tree for Cough

Nutrition

It is important to maintain a healthy diet. Those who eat fish weekly have lower risk of developing cough and faster resolution of URI's. Drink plenty of fluids! Fluids help thin mucous and soothe irritated airways. Warm liquids such as bone broth or tea, dilate blood vessels in the throat and help the body to fight infection. Honey has been well

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studied and is shown to be the most effective natural remedy (do not give honey to children under 1 years old as there is a risk of botulism). The most common herbal remedy for cough is tea, honey and lemon.

With chronic cough and congestion it is important to think about total body inflammation. Though your child may not have an allergy to foods, they may be sensitive to food proteins. The two most allergenic foods are dairy and gluten/wheat. Your child may be sensitive to either of these, so a good place to start, may be to remove these foods from the diet for a few weeks to see if you can decrease total body inflammation and allow the body to focus on healing from the infection.

Rest

When we are sick, our body uses all of our energy to fight the infection. While you are acutely ill, take it easy, sleep longer and take naps.

Air

Steam can help to loosen mucous and soothe irritated airways. You can run a hot shower and spend 10-15 minutes sitting in the room. You can also boil a pot of water and breathe in the steam. Most people find that dry air irritates the airways so a humidifier can be helpful..

Saline nasal spray and suction

For any congestion, saline spray followed by suction can be extremely helpful. You can buy saline spray at most stores or you can make your own at home with some pink Himalayan salt and water. Suction the nose frequently in young, congested, babies, as they often have more difficulty clearing mucous. You can try a bulb suction or Nose Freida. You can also try Xlear Nasal spray, it has a combination of Nasal saline and xyletol.

Medications

There are three main types of cough medicines, cough suppressants, expectorants (mucous loosener) and throat soothers.

There are a wide variety of over the counter cough medications to choose from. Most are not approved for children under 4 years old. There is no great evidence that any of the over the counter cough medications have great efficacy or are any better than

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honey, though there is a lot of anecdotal evidence from parents that it helps, so I'll leave the decision, if you want to give these a try, in your capable hands.

The American academy of Pediatrics has come out with a statement against cough suppressants. The two major forms are Dextromethorphan (DM) and codeine. Codeine is no longer prescribed to young children because there is a risk of respiratory suppression. Expectorants aim to loosen secretions, making it easier to cough them out. Guaifenesin is the main ingredient and Mucinex is a common expectorant. Cough drops work by stimulating saliva and coating irritated throats.

“Natural” Medications

There are a few natural options you can try including Zarbees, Chestal (Boiron), or Umcka (Natures Way). The main ingredient in most natural remedies is honey. Again, be sure not to give any honey to children under 1 y/o. Zarbees makes a newborn formulation with Agave nectar instead of honey so you can try that in a young child.

Probiotics

Probiotics have been shown to improve the gut micro-biome and decrease total body inflammation. That may help the body focus on the upper respiratory virus and clear the infection faster.

Other Medications

We will focus our attention in this write-up on upper respiratory viral infections and irritant coughs. There are many coughs that need specific medications including antibiotics for bronchitis or pneumonia, asthma medications, steroids etc. We will not cover these here. If you have concerns about your child's cough and think they require any of these medications, please speak to your pediatrician.

Herbs

A variety of herbs are helpful for coughs. Menthol has the most evidence for its efficacy for reducing irritant coughs. The rest of the herbs have a growing body of anecdotal history of their effectiveness. Most herbal remedies are taken in the form of teas and that is generally the safest form.

There are no clear guidelines for giving herbal teas. Generally we recommend:

- Children under 1 y/o- No more than 1 teaspoon, 3-4 times daily.

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- 1-3 year olds- You can give up to 1 oz, 4 times daily.
- 4-6 year olds, up to 3 oz, 4 times daily.
- Teens and adults, 3-4 oz, every 4-6 hours as needed.

Herbs that fight infection and that stimulate the immune system include garlic, thyme, eucalyptus, ginger, elderberry, licorice, dandelion root, agrimony, briar rose, echinacea, and nettles. Other herbs to loosen mucous including anise seed, fennel, and sage. Herbs to dry a cough include slippery elm bark, marsh mellow root, wild cherry bark, and astragalus. Relaxing herbs to help with sleep include chamomile and lavender.

Some of the more commonly used herbs include:

Elderberry is an herb that helps to loosen up congestion and make a cough more productive. When in the hot tea form, it is also soothing.

Licorice root remains a classic home remedy for sore throat relief, which may help diminish a cough triggered by throat irritation (and no, I don't mean the red candy).

Slippery elm is another herb that serves to remedy a cough by treating the underlying condition of a sore throat. The herb, when consumed as a tea, has antitussive and demulcent properties

Peppermint is an aromatic herb, one good for treating colds and digestive conditions. The active ingredient in peppermint is menthol, which works as a natural decongestant. The menthol diminishes the amount of mucus the individual has and it simultaneously works as an expectorant. This herb can help with dry coughs and sore throats. The herb is ideal for children.

N-acetylcysteine is a supplement that serves as a natural antioxidant, and can diminish issues and coughs related to inflammation. The supplement is an amino acid that diminishes oxidative stress within the user's lungs.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM)

You can also try Traditional Chinese medicine if that is in line with your families values. Kan herbs makes a product called windbreaker. You must work with a physician who can order this for you if you would like to give it a try.

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Poultice

Poultices have historically been used on the chest. Most common of those is the mustard poultice. The poultice is said to increase circulation to the chest. The mustard can be irritating to the skin so be careful about direct contact.

Vitamin C, D and Zinc

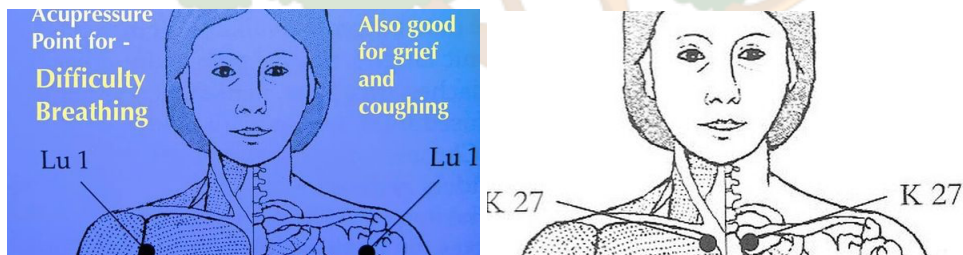
These have all been shown in some studies to minimally decrease the length of cough and congestion.

Massage

The healing power of touch is a simple and effective tool. Try giving your child a back and chest rub. Consider using Vicks or other chest/back rubs.

Acupuncture/Acupressure

Around the world, acupuncture has been used effectively for cough. Here are a few acupressure points you can massage at home. They have been found helpful with cough.



Ayurvedic remedies

(Don't forget, no honey to any children under 1 year old. Substitute agave nectar for honey). You can try:

- 1) Ghee nose drops
- 2) Golden yellow milk--- Boil 1 cup milk, ¼ tsp turmeric and ½ tsp ginger (can add garlic clove)
- 3) ¼ cup pomegranite juice with ginger powder.
- 4) For a dry cough try banana , honey, ground black pepper
- 5) For a productive cough you can try ½ teaspoon black pepper with 1 tsp honey or you can substitute for ghee -three times daily

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6) Tea of ¼ teaspoon ginger powder, pinch of clove, pinch of cinnamon in cup of boiled water

7) For a cough that is persistent, try ground mustard and ginger powder (¼ tsp), mix into teaspoon of honey

Essential Oils

You can use lavender or chamomile essential oils for their calming nature. You can also try eucalyptus essential oil, which has anti-inflammatory, expectorant, and mucolytic properties that help ease and move the mucus out. Please be careful in young children.

Do not place on nose or face. Lemon Essential Oil also has anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and antibacterial properties that surely help give you relief.

Homeopathy

There are a number of homeopathics that have been tried for cough including coldcalm (Boiron), hyland cough and cold, aconitum, camilia, phosphorus, and pulsatilla.

Homeopathics have not been proven to be effective, but there are years of anecdotal evidence that they can be helpful and they are not harmful. They should NOT be used in place of medications prescribed by a physician, but can be used in conjunction with them.

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