



Asthma  
Environmental Allergies  
Sinusitis  
Urticaria  
Food Allergies  
Insect Allergy  
Atopic Dermatitis  
Contact Dermatitis  
Drug Allergy  
Immunodeficiency  
Occupational Allergy  
Anaphylaxis  
Bronchitis  
Chronic Cough  
Allergic Rhinitis  
Immunotherapy

## Chronic Cough

Chronic cough is a cough that persists. Chronic cough is not a disease in itself, but rather a symptom of an underlying condition. Chronic cough is a common problem and the reason for many doctor visits.

### What are causes of chronic cough?

Some common causes of chronic cough include asthma, allergic rhinitis, sinus problems (for example sinus infection), and esophageal reflux of stomach contents. In rare cases, chronic cough may be the result of inhaling foreign objects into the lungs (usually in children). It is important to see a doctor who may order a chest X-ray, if a chronic cough is present. The following are common causes of chronic coughing.

- **Cigarette smoking** is the most common cause of chronic cough.
- **Asthma** is a disease of the airways, resulting in difficulty breathing or wheezing often characterized by abnormal breathing tests. Some asthma sufferers have chronic cough as their only symptom. They may even have normal lung functions tests. This is often referred to as cough-variant asthma. Asthma symptoms can be aggravated by cold air, exposure to air pollutants, pollen, smoke, or perfumes.
- **Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)** refers to acid reflux, or backward flow, of stomach acid and other contents into the esophagus. If stomach acid moves backward up the esophagus, reflexes result in spasm of the airways that can cause shortness of breath and coughing. In some instances, acid reflux can be so severe that substances can be inhaled (aspirated) into the lungs and cause similar symptoms as well as damage to lung tissue. In some individuals, no sensation of heartburn is felt and their only symptom may be cough.
- **Sinus problems and postnasal drip** can also cause chronic cough with mucus. This condition can be difficult to detect. Sometimes CT scan of the sinuses is necessary for diagnosis. Affected individuals often complain of a "tickle in their throat" and frequent throat clearing.
- **Infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia** can cause acute cough or a chronic cough. These infections can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or fungus. Viral infections do not respond to antibiotics. In patients with asthma, viral upper respiratory infections often result in a prolonged cough even after the infection has cleared.

Source: [http://www.medicinenet.com/chronic\\_cough/article.htm](http://www.medicinenet.com/chronic_cough/article.htm)

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- A particular strain of bacterial pneumonia, called *Mycoplasma*, may cause a chronic cough with fatigue, weakness, shortness of breath, and sputum production. This infection is sometimes referred to as "walking pneumonia," and commonly affects young and healthy people.
- **Whooping cough (pertussis)** is an acute, highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Whooping cough commonly affects infants and young children, but can be prevented by immunization with pertussis vaccine. In adults, whooping cough can be a cause of chronic cough.
- **Chronic cough in children is uncommon.** Foreign material obstructing the airways of the lungs, asthma, and allergies are evaluated by a pediatrician.
- Certain **medications**, notably ACE inhibitors (enalapril [Vasotec], captopril [Capoten] etc.) used in treating high blood pressure, can cause chronic cough.
- **Less common causes of chronic cough** include allergies, tumors, sarcoidosis, congestive heart failure, or other lung diseases such as chronic obstructive disease (COPD) or emphysema.

If chronic cough persists it is important to be evaluated by a doctor. To schedule an appointment with the Allergy, Asthma and Sinus Center of Long Island; Please call us at (516)822-6655

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