



## Understanding Your Lung Health: Chronic Cough

Although cough is a common symptom of many lung diseases, chronic cough can't always be linked to a specific disease or condition and often doesn't respond to treatment. If you have chronic cough it can feel like a burden on your daily life, with lack of sleep, mental and physical exhaustion or social stigma also impacting your quality of life.

### What Causes Chronic Cough?

Some common causes of chronic cough include:

- Lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma or pulmonary fibrosis.
- Allergies, sinus problems and digestive issues (such as gastroesophageal reflux or GERD)
- Medications
- Smoking

When the cause of the cough has been identified, it can be successfully treated. But sometimes a chronic cough persists, either because treating the underlying cause is not effective or because your healthcare provider is unable to discover what is causing your continued coughing.



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### Chronic Cough Symptoms

By definition, a cough is chronic if it lasts eight weeks or longer. In this case it is unlikely that the cough is caused by a respiratory infection and therefore will not go away with antibiotics. What is most frustrating for patients is that a chronic cough can become annoying, frustrating and at times embarrassing. It can also impact your day-to-day quality of life.

### Questions To Ask Your Doctor

A good working relationship with a doctor who understands your symptoms will help you find solutions to living with chronic cough. Here are some questions you can ask to clarify your condition:

- How do we know if I have chronic cough?
- What tests have been done to rule out diseases that could be causing my chronic cough?
- Are there any prescription medications I am on that could be contributing to my cough?
- What can I do to help manage my cough?

### Do you have chronic cough symptoms?

Take our quiz to understand if you have a chronic cough, and what next steps to take in your search for the root cause of your cough at [Lung.org/chronic-cough](https://www.lung.org/chronic-cough).

In addition, our Lung HelpLine is staffed by registered respiratory therapists that can help answer your lung health questions for free at **1-800-LUNGUSA**.