

Cough is a protective reflex response to airway irritation and is triggered by stimulation of airway cough receptors by either irritants or by conditions that cause airway distortion.

Cough hygiene

To minimise the risk of cross-transmission:

- cover the nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping & blowing the nose
- dispose of used tissues promptly into clinical waste bin used for infectious or contaminated waste
- clean hands with soap and water, alcohol hand rub or hand wipes after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, or after contact with respiratory secretions or objects contaminated by these secretions

Non-pharmacological measures

- humidify room air
- oral fluids
- honey & lemon in warm water
- suck cough drops / hard sweets
- elevate the head when sleeping
- avoid smoking

Pharmacological measures

- simple linctus 5-10mg PO QDS
if ineffective
- codeine linctus 30-60mg PO QDS
or
- morphine sulphate immediate release solution 2.5mg PO 4 hourly

If all these measures fail, seek specialist advice, to discuss:

- use of sodium cromoglicate 10 mg inhaled 4 times a day (can improve cough in people with lung cancer within 36-48 hours)
- use of oral corticosteroids
- if severe / end of life: morphine sulphate injection 10mg CSCI over 24 hours and 2.5-5mg SC 4 hourly PRN

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KILL IT.