

MULTIMEDIA TEACHING UNIT

School

Coughs

Aims and content

Aims:

- To find out what things cause a cough, so that we can avoid them.
- To learn what to do, if we have a cough, so as not to make it worse.
- To find out how not to pass on a cough to others.

Content:

- What is a cough?
- Types of cough
- What can we do to prevent it?
- How can we fight it?
- Are coughs fashionable?
- Coughs and sleep

Activities:

- Games for taking on coughs

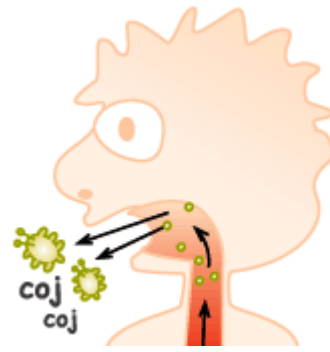
Procedures:

- Direct observation
- Scientific terms
- Recognition and description
- Information

A child gets a cough about eight times a year, on average; that means he or she has a bout of coughing every month and a half, or, what amounts to the same thing, every six-and-a-half weeks, every 45 days, every 1,080 hours or every 25,920 minutes. So it might not be a bad idea to know what we can do to avoid catching a cough and, if we already have one, what we can do to get rid of it.

What is a cough?

A cough is a **defence mechanism that our body has for protecting our respiratory system**. If we get a cough it means that something is not going quite like it should. So, a cough is rather like the tip of an iceberg: there could be other, unknown things lurking beneath it.



Types of cough

There are two different kinds of cough:

- 1. Dry cough: also called a non-productive cough.** This is the kind that occurs when we have a throat irritation and there is no mucus.
- 2. Wet, or productive cough:** this kind of cough produces expectoration and helps to eject any mucus from the throat and bronchi.

What can we do to prevent it?

You know how the saying goes: “prevention is better than cure”! So, if you want to keep coughs at bay, take the following advice:



1. Don't stand close to someone who is smoking. Besides avoiding lots of respiratory diseases and improving your health, you'll save yourself from having to put up with the nuisance of a cough.



2. If you suffer from hay fever, don't let springtime catch you out and about. On those difficult days it's best to stay indoors a bit more and keep the windows shut tight.



3. If you suffer from year-round allergies, it's a good idea to cover your pillow and mattress with anti-dust mite sheets.



4. If you know you're allergic to an animal or pets, keep your distance, no matter how much you like them.

How can we fight it?

If, despite all the above precautions, you've managed to get a cough, here are a few suggestions for dealing with it:



1. A dry cough that tickles your throat can be alleviated with **cough pastilles or cough drops**. Sometimes it may be a good idea to ease it with some cough syrup, especially at night.



2. For the productive cough there are **cough syrups** that will help to loosen up the mucus.



3. A **steam shower** may help to combat a dry cough, as it increases the humidity of the air.



4. **Drinking a lot of liquids** will help to dilute the mucus in your throate and make your cough more productive.

Are coughs fashionable?

One could say that every season has its cough, and that coughs never go out of fashion; they're around all the time.

In winter, most coughs are the result of a viral infection, such as **flu**.

In spring, **pollen** and **other allergens** are to blame for making us cough.

But that doesn't mean we can get rid of coughs that easily during the rest of the year. Remember that we can have a bout of coughing any time during the 365 days of the year.

Coughs and sleep

Have you ever heard your brother or sister, or a friend, coughing in their sleep? It's quite normal! Especially if we have sinusitis.

When we're asleep we're relaxed, not talking and not swallowing and, without realising it, **our body produces secretions in our throat that we have to get rid of**. Coughing is the defence mechanism that enables us to eject these secretions from our body.

Game

Some things can give us a cough or, if we already have one, can make it difficult for us to get rid of it.

Some other things, however, can help us fight it and avoid passing it on to others.

Pick out one of the pictures. If you think it is something that will make you cough, click an arrow to the left.

If you think it will get rid of your cough, click an arrow to the right.

Do the same with the other pictures.

1. Drinking lots of water
2. Covering your mouth when you sneeze
3. Eating a mint-flavoured sweet
4. A steam shower
5. Pollen from flowers
6. Being near an animal you're allergic to
7. Being near someone who is smoking
8. Taking cough pastilles or liquorice

