

# COUGH

## Home Care & Treatment

- > Cough lozenges or hard candy can help dry, tickling coughs. These should never be given to a child under 3 years old because of the risk of choking.
- > A vaporizer or steamy shower may help a dry cough by increasing the humidity in the air.
- > Drink extra fluids to help thin the secretions in your throat and make them easier to cough up.
- > Zinc lozenges may reduce the intensity of your cold symptoms, especially your cough.
- > Medications available without a prescription include:
  - ◇ Guafenesin (like Robitussin), which may help you bring up phlegm. Drink lots of fluids if taking this medication.
  - ◇ Cough suppressants like dextromethorphan (Vicks 44, Robitussin DM) may lessen your cough. Although coughing can be a troubling symptom, it is usually your

- body's way of healing the underlying condition. Therefore, you may not want to suppress the cough unless it is interfering with sleep or other factors important for healing.
- ◇ Decongestants, like pseudoephedrine and phenylephrine, can be used to clear a stuffy, runny nose accompanying your cough especially if you have postnasal drip. These should not be used if you have high blood pressure or for a child under six years old unless prescribed by your doctor.
  - > Drink a cup of warm lemon water that is sweetened with honey, or warm tea with peppermint, and ginger.
- Don't expect a physician to prescribe antibiotics for viral infections like colds or flu. Antibiotics have no effect on viruses. Antibiotics also will not help coughs from allergies.
- > Rest is important to speeding recovery.