

Coughing, shortness of breath

Coughing, shortness of breath during a COVID-19 infection (adults and children of school age)



Coughing is a common symptom of a COVID-19 infection. Coughing can range from mild irritating coughing (dry cough) caused by tickling in the upper throat area, to frequent and severe fits of coughing, which can also severely impair the night's rest. Sometimes you may experience shortness of breath.



What can you do?

- Drink plenty of fluids to loosen the mucus in your airways
- Cough teas or cough sweets can help alleviate the symptoms
- Movement in general and changing positions can help you to cough up the mucus
- Sit up straight when coughing as this helps you dislodge the mucus
- If sitting up is difficult, use your arms to support yourself
- If you are lying down, your upper body should be slightly raised. Turning to your side when coughing can help
- Various compresses/rubs in the chest area may bring relief
- Steam inhalation
- Increase the air humidity by hanging damp cloths in the room
- Open windows to air the room regularly

For shortness of breath:

- Call the doctor or the health advice hotline ☎ 1450
- Support your arms by propping them up on your thighs
- Purse your lips and breath in deeply through the nose; breath out again through your lips – your lips are gently closed so that breathing out makes a “pfff” sound

Avoid infecting others: wash your hands regularly (for at least 20 seconds, with soap) or disinfect them; cough or sneeze into your elbow and not your hands; keep your distance; and wear an FFP2 mask when in contact with other persons/medical personnel

If you are worried or need medical information for yourself, your child, or a relative you are caring for, call ☎ 1450, the health advice hotline.

When should I call a doctor?



It is generally recommended to keep in touch with your family doctor by telephone. You should certainly seek medical advice if you:

- have very severe symptoms (e.g., a high or persistent fever, severe pain)
- have difficulty breathing
- experience shortness of breath after minor exertion or when talking
- feel pain or pressure in the chest area
- have a chronic respiratory illness
- (or your child) are unable to drink or hold down fluids
- notice you are starting to find it hard to stay awake (slipping into unconsciousness)
- notice the skin of your lips, toes or fingers turning blue
- notice one of your legs/lower legs swelling and/or becoming painful

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or

- have one or more of the risk factors which increase the likelihood of becoming severely ill from a COVID-19 infection.

Overview of the most important risk factors:

- Age > 50
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular diseases
- High blood pressure
- Vascular disease
- Smoker
- Trisomy 21
- Overweight with a body mass index (BMI) > 30
- Chronic liver or kidney disease
- Stroke or heart attack (in recent years)
- Diabetes mellitus
- Respiratory disease
- Neurological and psychiatric disease (e.g., dementia)
- Immunosuppression (due to disease or medication)
- Pregnant (especially with additional risk factors)

