



Washington
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Chronic Cough

It's crucial to collaborate with a healthcare provider to figure out the right diagnostic and treatment approach for chronic cough. The first step is an initial evaluation, which involves a thorough discussion of your medical history and a physical examination. This evaluation helps identify any warning signs that may suggest a condition requiring urgent attention.



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Chronic cough is defined as a cough that persists for more than eight weeks in adults and more than four weeks in children. It can be a sign of an underlying medical condition that needs to be diagnosed and treated appropriately. Here's an overview of the diagnosis and management of chronic cough.

Diagnosis: The diagnosis of chronic cough involves a thorough medical history, physical examination, and diagnostic tests. The following tests may be done to determine the underlying cause of the cough:

1. **Chest X-ray:** A chest X-ray can help identify any abnormalities in the lungs or airways.
2. **Pulmonary Function tests:** Pulmonary function tests can help determine if there is any lung disease or airway obstruction.
3. **Sputum analysis:** Sputum analysis can help identify any infections or other abnormalities in the respiratory tract.
4. **CT scan:** A CT scan can provide more detailed images of the lungs and airways.
5. **Bronchoscopy:** Bronchoscopy involves the insertion of a flexible tube with a camera into the airways to visualize the lungs and airways and collect tissue samples for analysis.



Management: The management of chronic cough depends on the underlying cause. Here are some common treatments for various causes of chronic cough:

1. Asthma: Inhaled bronchodilators and steroids can help reduce inflammation and improve breathing.

2. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD): Medications that reduce stomach acid production, lifestyle changes, and avoiding foods that trigger GERD can help manage the cough.

3. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD): Medications, oxygen therapy, and pulmonary rehabilitation can help manage the cough and improve breathing.

4. Postnasal drip: Nasal steroids, decongestants, and antihistamines can help reduce mucus production and alleviate the cough.

5. Medication-induced cough: Stopping the medication or switching to an alternative medication can help alleviate the cough.

6. Lung cancer: Treatment depends on the type and stage of the cancer and may involve surgery, radiation therapy, or chemotherapy.



In addition to medical treatment, lifestyle changes, such as quitting smoking, avoiding exposure to irritants, and maintaining a healthy weight, can help manage chronic cough.