



Suffering from a bad cough?

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I've been hearing a lot from patients recently who thought they had a simple head cold but after several days it morphed into an annoying, debilitating cough. While it may be caused by the same germ, *no two people are exactly alike, and no two people have an identical symptom picture.*

I received a phone call couple of days ago from a husband and wife both having a residual cough, one a deep cough and the other a hacking cough. Both felt "drained of energy". The husband (I'll call him Tom) had had a cold for 10 days which began with the "sniffles". He called me as he was leaving work a few hours early because he had begun to feel extreme fatigue and his hacking cough had progressed to a barking cough. "I just kept feeling worse." Both warm air and warm food and drinks made him feel better while cold drinks and, cold air aggravated his cough which was particularly bad when he went to bed at night, "I cough like crazy" but when I go to sleep the cough stops until I wake up in the morning. Eating food also improved his symptoms.

Tom's wife, I'll call her, Barbara, also had what she initially thought was a simple head cold with clear phlegm but a few days later she began to have coughing spells. "In the beginning, I felt alert and not overly tired, but my sleep was restless, and I felt irritable and still do. Now I am feeling increasingly tired even though I am restless." Barbara's other symptoms: better from warmth and warm drinks, dry lips, teeth hurt, a headache that that came from the top her head which came and went. She sneezed throughout the day, but her sneezing was the worst in the morning. Her cough was deep... "it feels like it goes from the top of my head to my feet."

As you can see, Tom and Barbara probably had the same 'bug' but there were differences in their symptoms. They each received a different remedy on day one and as their symptoms improved, each required a different follow-up remedy on day two.

Listed below are some of the most commonly used remedies prescribed:

Arsenicum: profuse, watery nasal discharge, restless, anxious, chilly. Cough worse at night, esp. between midnight and 3 a.m. Frequent violent sneezing. Coughing from tickling in the larynx or from deep in the chest

Bryonia: When cold has moved to the chest. Dry, stitching painful cough. Irritating, racking cough. Person holds chest while coughing. Deep breath aggravates. Thirsty. Wants to be alone and keep still. Movement aggravates all symptoms.

Drosera: Dry, violent cough, worse at night when person lies down. Barking, spasmodic cough with retching, Comes on suddenly. High temperature. Flushed face. Voice hoarse. Bad mood. Gagging and vomiting. Big remedy for whooping cough.

Hepar Sulph: Indicated during later stages of cold. Rattling, loose chesty cough. Difficult to cough up phlegm. Coughs up thick, yellow phlegm. Feels very cold and wants to be covered. Irritable, critical and impatient with cough. Cough worse once in bed.

Nux Vomica: tight, dry hacking with bursting headache. Worse physical exertion, cold and lying on back.

Phosphorus: Dry, tickling cough. Cough worse from cold air, talking, laughing. Mucous can be blood streaked from nose. Colds that turn to coughs / chest infections. Cough comes on in evening or twilight. Laryngitis and hoarseness, especially when symptoms are worse in the morning or evening. Thirsty and want ice-cold drinks or ice-cream.

Pulsatilla: Dry cough with yellow/green mucous. Worse in evening, morning, lying down. Cough may be loose in morning. Must sit up to cough. Worse for stuffy warm rooms and better for fresh air. Cough dry at night, loose by day. Thirstless. May retch from cough. Tearful and clingy...but not so obvious in an adult.

Rhus tox: Dry cough with tickling behind the upper part of the breastbone. Coughing and sneezing. Coughs from midnight though till morning. Coughing interferes with sleep. Patient is restless and better from moving about.

Rumex: Dry, shallow, tickling cough. Irritating cough. Suffocative, choking cough. Cough coming from the larynx - intense tickling. Cough set off by cool air, ie. changing rooms or undressing. Cough worse from lying down in the evening or first waking. Touching the throat can aggravate cough.

Spongia: Dry, barking raspy cough – sounds like a seal barking. Worse cold air with profuse expectoration and suffocation. Feeling of accumulation of mucus and weight in chest. Attacks of coughing. Big remedy for croup. Worse wet weather.

If the cough is persistent seek help from a homeopath or medical professional.
