

# THINK! SELF-CARE

ADULTS AND CHILDREN OVER 12 YEARS

## COUGH

**HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?** 3-4 weeks

**HOW SERIOUS IS IT?** Minor

**CAN I STILL WORK?** Yes

### WHAT IS IT?

Most adults experience episodes of coughing between two and five times a year, and about one in five people suffer from coughs during the winter months.

A cough may be acute, lasting less than three weeks, or chronic, when it may go on for more than eight weeks. Coughs can also be dry or productive of sputum (phlegm).



### HOW DO I TREAT IT?

- Try not to cough
- Try simple home remedies, such as 'honey and lemon' – just add freshly squeezed juice from one lemon and a teaspoon of honey to a mug of hot water.
- Drink at least 6 to 9 glasses of water in a day and suck lozenges.

### MEDICINES:

Paracetamol can help with relieving symptoms that may accompany a cough, such as a sore throat, fevers, and not feeling well.

### WHEN DO I NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION?

Seek medical advice immediately if you feel more unwell than you'd expect, if it starts after you've choked on something, or if you notice any of the following warning symptoms:

- You cough up blood for no obvious reason.
- Your cough is not getting better within three to four weeks.
- In addition to your cough, you have chest and/or shoulder pain.
- You also find it difficult to breathe or talk in full sentences.
- You're losing weight for no apparent reason over a period of six weeks or more.
- Your voice becomes hoarse for longer than three weeks
- You notice new swellings anywhere in the neck or above your collarbones.