

Types of coughs



Coughs are one of the most common symptoms that walk through our naturopathic door.

The first thing a naturopath will do is determine the type of cough and hopefully the cause.

- Is the cough spasmodic and worse for stress?
- Is there a sensation of something stuck in the throat like a dry tickle?
- Does it come on after eating a certain food like dairy?
- Is it debilitating and lasting long after the initial infection has cleared up?
- Does the person get a flush of heat or cold with the cough or does it make them lose their appetite?

When you have a cough rest is important.

With sleep disturbances due to the hacking cough, getting enough rest is a big problem.

This is time to cut your schedule back to the bare minimum.

Use warming spices such as aniseed and cinnamon in your hot drinks and food. Cook with plenty of onion and garlic and remember to increase the amount of orange vegetables in your diet. It is a good idea to skip the flour and dairy while you have a lot of phlegm.

Steam inhalations can soothe the spasmy cough as well as deliver some anti-infective constituents to the lungs. Add 1 or 2 drops of cypress, eucalyptus or tea tree essential oil to a bowl of hot water and breathe in slowly, covering your head and bowl with a towel to trap the steam.

As it can be difficult to move the mucus out of the lungs onion cough syrup makes a simple home remedy to help thin the phlegm and make it easier to expel.

A qualified herbalist might treat with the following categories of herbs:

- Immune support include: echinacea, astragalus, olive leaf, wild indigo, thyme.
- Respiratory antispasmodics include: mullein and elecampane
- Soothing demulcent herbs include: licorice (not the confectionery kind) and marshmallow.
- For night time relief a natural cough suppressant can be used, but generally a suppressant is only used to help someone get some sleep.