

Upper Respiratory Tract Infections and Their Causes

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Commentary

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DESCRIPTION

Upper respiratory tract infections (URTI) are considered to be among the most common types of infections experienced by humans. Per year the average adult suffers between 2 and 5 URTI's such as the common cold or influenza. Symptoms of a URTI can include coughing/sneezing, nasal discharge and congestion, fever, sore throat, nasal breathing. Common advice suggests that one should rest while dealing with a URTI, although other suggest the health benefits of moderate exercise.

Cough

A cough is a reflex action to clear airways of mucus and irritants such as dust or smoke. It's rarely a sign of anything serious. Most coughs clear up within 3 weeks and don't require any treatment. A dry cough means it's tickly and doesn't produce any phlegm (thick mucus). A chesty cough means phlegm is produced to help clear airways.

Short-term coughs: Common causes of a short-term cough include upper respiratory tract infection that affects the throat, windpipe or sinuses – examples are a cold, flu, laryngitis, sinusitis or whooping cough, a lower respiratory tract infection that affects lungs or lower airways – examples are acute bronchitis or pneumonia or an allergy, such as allergic rhinitis or hay fever or a flare-up of a long-term condition such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or chronic bronchitis inhaled dust or smoke coronavirus. In rare cases, a short-term cough may be the first sign of a health condition that causes a persistent cough.

Persistent coughs: A persistent cough may be caused by a long-term respiratory tract infection, such as chronic bronchitis, asthma – this also usually causes other symptoms, such as wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Stuffy or runny nose – adult Stuffy or congested nose occurs when the tissues lining it become swollen. The swelling is due to inflamed blood vessels. The problem may also include nasal discharge or "runny nose." If excess

mucus runs down the back of throat (postnasal drip), it may cause a cough or sore throat. A stuffy or runny nose may be caused by Common cold, Flu and Sinus infection.

Sore throat: A sore throat is pain, scratchiness or irritation of the throat that often worsens when swallowed. The most common cause of a sore throat (pharyngitis) is a viral infection, such as a cold or the flu. A sore throat caused by a virus resolves on its own. Strep throat (streptococcal infection), a less common type of sore throat caused by bacteria, requires treatment with antibiotics to prevent complications. Other less common causes of sore throat might require more complex treatment. Symptoms of a sore throat can vary depending on the cause. Signs and symptoms might include Pain or a scratchy sensation in the throat, Pain that worsens with swallowing or talking, Difficulty swallowing Sore, swollen glands in neck or jaw Swollen, red tonsils, White patches or pus on tonsils, A hoarse or muffled voice.

Nasal breathing: As we function throughout the day, we breathe as an unconscious act. Since breathing is something we're so comfortable with, we rarely give our breathing technique a second thought. If we begin to consider the way breathe, might notice the difference between nasal breathing and breathing through the mouth. Is there any benefit in doing one over the other? The truth is, our bodies are designed to breathe nasally. When we breathe through the nose, we are essentially filtering the oxygen before it enters the lungs. Those nose hairs might be trimming actually act to filter out dust, allergens, and other foreign particles from reaching the lungs.