

# Coughs

It is probably **common knowledge** by now that coughing is one of the symptoms of COVID-19. But we should remember that coughing is a **protective mechanism**. Coughing is a reflex that helps us to remove pathogens, **mucous**, and **foreign bodies** from the **upper airways**.

**H**owever, if coughing becomes chronic it can **interrupt** sleep, and, in **severe cases**, cause **vomiting**, **light-headedness**, and even rib fractures. A chronic cough is one that lasts eight weeks or longer in adults, and up to four weeks in children. While it can sometimes be difficult to **pinpoint** the

exact cause, the most common causes are: tobacco use, **postnasal drip syndrome**, asthma, and acid reflux. A chronic cough may include the following signs and symptoms: frequent throat clearing or sore throat, **hoarseness**, **wheezing** and **shortness of breath**, and **heartburn** or a sour taste in the mouth.

**PTA: Guten Tag.**

Male customer: Do you speak English?

**Yes, I do. What can I do for you?**

I have had this **persistent** cough since just before Christmas. And I have tried a few **home remedies**, but nothing seems to help.

**Could you describe your cough for me, please?**

Certainly, it comes very suddenly, and it is so bad that I sometimes have shortness of breath.

**Does it bother you more during the day, or do you find yourself waking up coughing during the night?**

Initially it was just during the day, but for about four or five nights now it's been waking me up, and frankly, it's **exhausting** me.

**Did you have a cold or flu at any time in the last few weeks?**

I had a bit of a cold between Christmas and New Year, but I got over it quite quickly. I didn't go to the doc-

tors, as they are not taking patients with COVID-19 symptoms. And cough is one of them. Don't worry, I had a test just last week and, thankfully, I tested negative. My wife and kids were okay too.

**That's good! Is your nose still, maybe, a little runny, you know do you have the feeling of liquid going into the back of your throat when you are sleeping? Especially when, as you said, you wake up in the night?**

That's it exactly!

**I believe you might have something called postnasal drip syndrome!**

Oh, that sounds serious.

**Thankfully, it isn't. It happens when your nose, or sinuses produce extra mucous, which is often the case in colds, and allergies. It's quite common at this time of the year, and in spring and summer when pollen is at its highest.**

What do you recommend?

I can recommend this **saline nasal spray**. This will help to **flush out** the excess mucous. And I also recommend **nasal irrigation**.

Nasal irrigation! That is not very pleasant, is it!

**Not really, but it is great at flushing mucous, bacteria, and any other irritants.**

Okay! I'll try it, anything for a good night's sleep!

**If the symptoms don't improve in three or four days, please, go to a doctor.**

Thank you, I will. Bye, bye.

**Good bye.**

*Catherine Croghan,  
Lecturer in English and  
native speaker*

## VOCABULARY

cough	Husten
common knowledge	allgemein bekannte Tatsachen
protective mechanism	Schutzmechanismus
mucous	Schleim
foreign bodies	Fremdkörper
upper airways	obere Atemwege
interrupt	unterbrechen
severe cases	schwerwiegende Fälle
vomiting	Erbrechen
light-headedness	Benommenheit
pinpoint	präzise
postnasal drip syndrome	Postnasal-Drip-Syndrom
hoarseness	Heiserkeit
wheezing	Pfeifatmung
shortness of breath	Kurzatmigkeit
heartburn	Sodbrennen
persistent	hartnäckig, anhaltend
home remedies	Hausmittel
exhausting	ermüdend, anstrengend
sinuses	Nebenhöhlen
saline nasal spray	salzhaltiges Nasenspray
flush out	durchspülen
nasal irrigation	Nasenspülung
irritants	Reizstoffe