

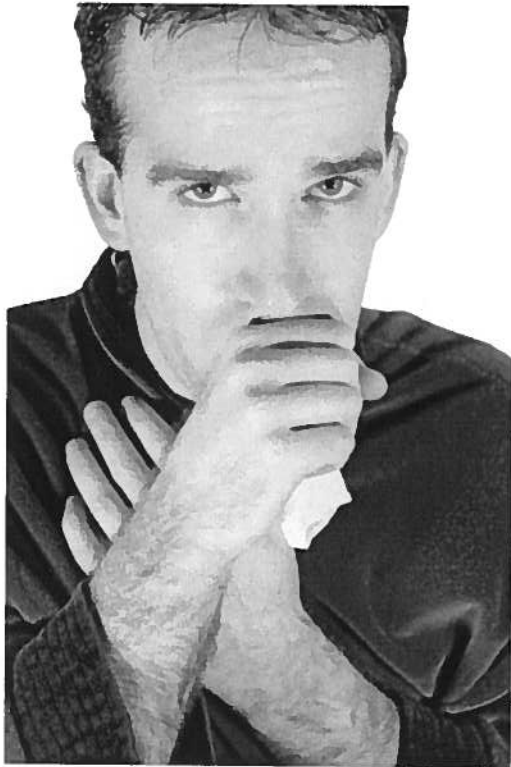
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Tips for Controlling Your Cough

By Wendy Braun

Despite all the H1N1 hype, less than one-quarter of American adults know that a dry, hacking cough may be a symptom of the flu, according to new surveys. And that misunderstanding can prevent people from getting the relief—and the sleep—they need.

Coughs caused by the flu are not the same as those associated with colds, says nurse practitioner Mary Ellen Roberts, who explains:

"Coughs have different causes and effects. People with a cold may need an expectorant such as guaifenesin to help clear out mucus. For dry, hacking coughs associated with the flu, patients should usually consider the cough suppressant dextromethorphan, as well as acetaminophen to reduce fever and pain."

Over-the-counter cough relievers with ingredients to suppress coughs as well as clear mucus may be the best choice for coughs that disrupt sleeping,

the most commonly reported consequence of severe coughs.

"Cough sufferers need to know that losing sleep because they don't treat their symptoms properly can have ramifications at work or school," said Roberts. "We frequently see patients continue normal activities regardless of how they feel. While this may be reflective of the current economic situation, people need to know that it may not be the wisest decision in the long term, and that available products can provide relief of their symptoms for up to 12 hours."

Roberts adds that people should seek the advice of a health care practitioner for a continuous cough lasting more than seven days. Most coughs due to colds and flu will resolve on their own within three weeks.

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January 16, 2010

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A. Franklin, Physician

Posted January 16, 2010 at 6:58 pm | Permalink

There is no proof that guaifenesin does any good. DELSYM is the best OTC cough preparation. For severe cough COPHYLAC works; needs a prescription.

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