Cough, Viral

You have been seen today for your cough. Your caregiver feels that your cough is caused by a virus. Viral infections must run their course and will not respond to antibiotics.

The following information may or may not apply to you. It is possible that some of your lab work or X-rays may need to be available to make a final diagnosis. Sometimes some of these tests require repeating.

- X-rays may have been taken today and will be read again by a radiologist. The official reading will be back in 1 to 2 days. Call to see if there is a difference between the initial reading and the radiologist's.
- Lab work may have been done today and results should be back within 24 hours. Call in 1 day for your lab results or as directed.
- Cultures may have been done today. These generally take at least 2 days for results. Call in 2 to 3 days for your results or as directed.
- You may have had special procedures done today and the results will not be available for a few days. Call for your results or as directed.

Not all test results are available during your visit. If your test results are not back during the visit, make an appointment with your caregiver to find out the results. Do not assume everything is normal if you have not heard from your caregiver or the medical facility. It is important for you to follow up on all of your test results.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Cough suppressants may be used as directed by your caregiver. Keep in mind that coughing helps clear mucus and infection out of the respiratory tract. It is best to only use cough suppressants to allow your child to rest. For children under the age of 4 years, use cough suppressants **only** as directed by your child's caregiver.
- Your caregiver may also prescribe an expectorant to loosen the mucous to be coughed up.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver.
- Smoking is the most common cause of bronchitis and coughing. It is a large cause of pneumonia. Stopping this habit is important.
- A **cold** steam vaporizer or humidifier in your room or home may help loosen secretions.
- Cough is most often worse at night. Sleeping in a semi-upright position or using a couple of pillows will help with this.
- Get rest as you feel it is needed. Your body will help guide you in this manner.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop more pus like (*purulent*) sputum, have an uncontrolled fever, or become more ill. This is especially true if you are elderly or weakened (*debilitated*) from any other disease.
- You cannot control your cough with suppressants and are losing sleep.
- You begin coughing up blood.
- Anytime it becomes difficult to breathe (shortness of breath).
- You develop pain which is getting worse or is uncontrolled with medications.
- You or your child has an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**
- If any of the symptoms that first brought you in for care are getting worse rather than better.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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