

What to look for

- difficulties in breathing.
- cough.
- chills and fever.
- Fatigue.

Respiratory problems may also be accompanied by:

- rapid breathing.
- shortness of breath.
- pain in the chest.
- slight headache.
- overall despondency.
- common cold symptoms: runny nose, sore throat, and sneezing.

There are different types of respiratory problems. There are respiratory infections, such as the common cold, pneumonia, and tuberculosis, lung diseases, such as asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema and other types of lung diseases related to a person's line of work, such as asbestosis.

Causes

Respiratory infections can be mild (when you have a cold) all the way through to more serious illnesses such as pneumonia. They are caused by viruses or bacteria.

Lung diseases have different causes. Asthma can be aggravated by allergens, irritants, or excessive exercise and emphysema is caused by excessive smoking.

Other lung diseases can be brought on by workplace substances such as asbestos. Have your doctor investigate your symptoms to enable a proper diagnosis to be done.

Traditional Treatment

Many respiratory infections usually go away on their own in a week to 10 days and there are a range of conventional and alternative treatments available.

If you have a bacterial respiratory infection, your doctor will probably prescribe an appropriate antibiotic.

When to seek further professional advice

- you have a common cold or cough that lasts for more than 10 days and that is not relieved by over-the-counter medications.
- you have a high fever, chills, pain in your chest, and a cough that brings up bloody mucus.
- you have difficulty breathing.