

CHRONIC (REFRACTORY) COUGH

Information Sheet

What is a chronic cough?

A chronic cough is a cough that lasts for more than 8 weeks. It is essential that anyone who experiences a chronic cough sees a doctor to investigate the cause. This may involve referral to a Respiratory doctor, who can perform investigations to rule out a pulmonary (lung) cause, such as pneumonia, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (emphysema), lung cancer, TB or another cause of airway inflammation, such as Eosinophilic Bronchitis.

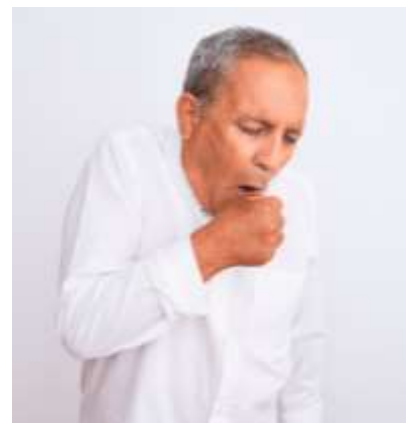
What is a chronic refractory cough?

A Chronic Refractory Cough is a persistent cough of more than 8 weeks, with no known cause or which has persisted despite appropriate medical treatment. Referral to a Speech and Language Therapist is recommended.

What can cause a Chronic Refractory Cough?

There can be many causes for a chronic refractory cough. The most common causes include:

- Acid Reflux (backflow of stomach juices into the oesophagus, throat and/or voice box)
- Viral infections such as a colds or flu
- Aspiration (swallowed material entering the airway due to a swallowing impairment)
- Asthma, Allergies, Rhinosinusitis (inflammation of the nasal passages and sinuses)
- Certain medications e.g. ACE inhibitors such as Ramipril



Created by: Janet Savva (Highly Specialised Speech and Language Therapist)
Somerset Speech Voice and Swallowing Therapy (SSVST)

Date Created: April 2020
Review Date: April 2022

Email: ssvst@outlook.com
Web: www.somersetspeechvoiceandswallowingtherapy.com

SOMERSET SPEECH VOICE AND SWALLOWING THERAPY

Signs and symptoms

As well as a persistent dry cough, a chronic cough may occur with other symptoms such as:

- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Heartburn or a sour taste in your mouth
- Post-nasal drip (feeling of mucus running down the back of your throat)
- Frequent throat clearing or sore throat
- Hoarse voice
- Laryngospasm (vocal cord spasms suddenly making it difficult to breath in)
- Globus (lump in the throat sensation)

Common triggers

- An irritation or tickling sensation in the throat
- Talking, especially whilst on the telephone, laughing or singing
- Physical exercise
- Smoke, fumes or certain smells (bleach, aerosols, perfumes)
- Mucus sensation in the throat
- Sudden changes in temperature or Air conditioning
- Eating or drinking
- Stress or anxiety

Why is Speech and Language Therapy useful?

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) who have a specialist training in the upper airway, have an important role to play in the treatment of Chronic Refractory Cough. SLTs can work with you to improve your control over the cough and reduce your symptoms.

What will happen at my initial consultation?

At your initial consultation a comprehensive case history will be taken which will include a review of your medical history, any medications you take regularly and your lifestyle. We will explore how these could be impacting on your cough. We will work with you to identify your cough triggers and help you to reduce anything that irritates your cough. You will be coached in strategies to suppress any deliberate coughing and throat-clearing behaviours.

Created by: Janet Savva (Highly Specialised Speech and Language Therapist)
Somerset Speech Voice and Swallowing Therapy (SSVST)

Date Created: April 2020
Review Date: April 2022

Email: ssvst@outlook.com
Web: www.somersetspeechvoiceandswallowingtherapy.com

SOMERSET SPEECH VOICE AND SWALLOWING THERAPY

What will happen in therapy?

You may need to return for individual behavioural therapy in which you will be coached in a variety of activities aimed at improving your cough. These will include raising your awareness of your urge to cough, implementing cough suppression techniques and addressing any vocal tract health issues or vocal behaviours that may be contributing to your cough.

You may need therapy to address any associated problems such as excessive muscle tension in your shoulders, neck or throat, globus sensation, altered breathing patterns, dysphonia (voice problems) and any laryngospasm concerns.

The number of therapy sessions you require will depend on the cause and severity of your chronic cough or any contributing medical problems. However most importantly, your progress will be influenced by your commitment to making lifestyle changes and practicing your therapy activities outside of sessions.

Created by: Janet Savva (Highly Specialised Speech and Language Therapist)
Somerset Speech Voice and Swallowing Therapy (SSVST)

Date Created: April 2020
Review Date: April 2022

Email: ssvst@outlook.com
Web: www.somersetspeechvoiceandswallowingtherapy.com