

What is a cough?

It is a normal reflex. It helps to remove smoke, dust, fluids, etc. from the airways.

Do we need to treat a cough medically?

Mostly not. Coughing is a useful way of clearing the airways. Only if a cough is very irritating, then it may be necessary to treat.

What helps against the pathogens?

When suffering from a cold, viruses are the main cause of a cough. Only in a few cases does bacteria play a role. Antibiotics can only work against bacteria, but not against viruses. The body's own immune system can neutralize viruses and bacteria very effectively. Antibiotics are needed only if complications caused by bacteria occur, as for example in cases of pneumonia.

Does a cough disappear faster with antibiotics?

No. Research has proven it.

Why are we very careful with antibiotics?

There are two main reasons: An antibiotic can have side effects and cause harm for those taking them, like every other drug. Moreover bacteria can become more and more resistant every time they are in contact with antibiotics. In the future antibiotics may no longer work if needed to treat a serious disease.

Why do doctors prescribe antibiotics anyway?

Because some doctors think that their patients believe in antibiotics and expect them to be prescribed. Moreover doctors are particularly tempted to prescribe antibiotics if patients show them that the cough is causing them great suffering.

What can the patient do?

Trust your doctor in the treatment of acute cough. Ask him/her to examine you scrupulously, don't push for an antibiotic. Decide together with your doctor, which treatment is the right one for you!