

Priority Topic: COUGH

Key Features:

This topic is all about diagnosing causes of cough

For a single source of info on this topic: (covers peds and adult!)

[Chronic Cough: Evaluation and Management AAFP 2017](#)

1. In patients presenting with an [acute cough](#):
 - a) Include [serious causes](#) (e.g., pneumothorax, pulmonary embolism [PE]) in the differential diagnosis.
 - b) Diagnose a [viral infection clinically](#), principally by taking an appropriate history.
 - c) [Do not treat viral infections with antibiotics](#). (Consider antiviral therapy if appropriate.)

What you should study: see also: [Priority Topic URTI](#)

- ✓ [Une toux rebelle MduQ 2016](#)
- ✓ [Acute Cough in Adults 2014 Tables 2 and 3](#)
- ✓ [Acute Cough in Children CFP 2011](#)

2. In [pediatric patients](#) with a [persistent \(or recurrent\) cough](#), generate a [broad differential diagnosis](#) (e.g., gastroesophageal reflux disease [GERD], asthma, rhinitis, presence of a foreign body, pertussis).

What you should study:

- ✓ Chronic Cough: Evaluation and Management AAFP 2017
- ✓ Chronic Cough Algorithm in Children AAP 2013

3. In patients with a **persistent (e.g., for weeks) cough** :

a) Consider **non-pulmonary causes** (e.g., GERD, congestive heart failure, rhinitis), as well as **other serious causes** (e.g., cancer, PE) in the differential diagnosis. (Do not assume that the child has viral bronchitis).

b) **Investigate** appropriately.

What you should study:

- ✓ Chronic Cough: Evaluation and Management AAFP 2017
- ✓ Delayed Onset Antibiotic Rx for New-Onset Cough POEM AAFP 2018

4. Do not ascribe a persistent cough to an adverse drug effect (e.g., from an angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitor) **without first considering other causes**.

5. In **smokers with persistent cough** , assess for chronic bronchitis (**chronic obstructive pulmonary disease**) and make a positive diagnosis when it is present. (Do not just diagnose a smoker's cough.)

What you should study:

- ✓ **See Priority Topic: Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease**