

# Still Coughing?

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Out like a lion, in like a lamb? More like out like a sea lion - the end of 2010 has been marked by an outbreak of a virus causing a lingering barking cough. The viral infection affecting many in the metro area has been severe and tenacious with a tendency to drop down into the chest and cause weeks of barking cough, post nasal drip, shortness of breath, fatigue and for many people, sick days from work. With a harsh cough like this, many have turned to conventional over-the-counter (OTC) remedies in the form of anti-histamines, expectorants and anti-tussives (cough suppressants). While these medications may temporarily relieve symptoms, they can increase the total duration of a cold, flu or bronchitis.

Some of the best treatment for cough associated with cold and flu are a typical mom's advice: drink plenty of liquids and get lots of rest. To speed recovery, there are also many good natural treatments, including:



**Hydrotherapy (Water Therapy)** – This may include nasal lavage with a neti pot or Neil Med rinse with or without the addition of an antimicrobial herbal formula. Other good options include a treatment called a hot fomentation which applies alternating hot and cold applications to the chest and back to help promote healing and move phlegm.

**Cupping** – A shared healing method in my folk traditions and a part of classical Chinese medicine, cupping involves applying glass or plastic cups to the skin with suction and has provided many with relief from their cough this season.

**Vitamin and Mineral Supplementation** – A proper combination of vitamins and minerals can not only boost the immune system to fight an underlying infection, but also help break up mucus for ease in expectoration.

**Herbal Medicine** – Herbal cough syrups are formulated such that they often bring relief to symptoms as well as speed healing. Herbal tea, tincture or capsule formulas can also be helpful in speeding recovery.

If you have lingering symptoms of cough, cold or flu, it's important to be evaluated to determine that you don't have a more serious infection, pneumonia or an underlying condition that needs different treatment. Call or visit your doctor if you have a high or lingering fever, your mucus contains any blood, you experience shortness of breath or chest pain, you are pregnant or you have an underlying heart or lung condition such as asthma or COPD. For a complete evaluation and individualized treatment plan, come into True Health Medicine.



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