

# Dry Cough and Sore Throat

Sometimes, a sore throat can be accompanied by cough, which can be productive or non-productive. A non-productive **cough** is also known as a dry cough, which can be identified by the absence of phlegm or sputum production, unlike a productive cough.

- Sometimes, a sore throat and **dry cough** can occur simultaneously, while at other times, a dry cough can follow a sore throat.
- This condition can be alleviated or treated effectively once the underlying cause/causes are discerned.
- So, let's find out the factors or conditions that can cause a sore throat and dry cough.



## Pharyngitis

Pharyngitis is the infection or inflammation of the pharynx or the back of the throat. The affected individual can experience a sore throat, scratchiness in the throat, and difficulty in swallowing. Sometimes, a fever, a runny nose, headaches, and body aches can also be experienced. However, the most common symptom of this condition is a sore throat, which can be accompanied by a dry cough at times. Pharyngitis can be caused by both viral and bacterial infections.

The time required for complete recovery from pneumonia is usually between 2 weeks to 2 months depending on the severity of the infection, and the immune system of the individual who has contracted the disease.

- Elastic tension increases during inspiration and decreases due to recoil during expiration.
- Lung compliance is inversely proportional to elastic resistance.
- The elastic forces that are responsible for lung compliance include:

## Laryngitis

The inflammation of the larynx or the voice box is referred to as laryngitis. It can be caused by upper respiratory infections or an overuse of the voice box by singing or shouting. A dry and sore throat, hoarseness or loss of voice, and cough are the common symptoms of this condition. Children can experience croup, a type of hoarse, barking cough due to laryngitis.

## Acute Bronchitis

Acute **bronchitis** can also start with a dry cough, which is then followed by the production of a small amount of white or yellow sputum, wheezing, a sore throat, fever, shortness of breath, and a burning sensation in the chest. Bronchitis refers to the inflammation of the mucous membranes of the bronchi. Bronchitis can be acute or chronic. Acute bronchitis is usually caused by viral or bacterial infections, while **chronic bronchitis** is caused by smoking or long-term occupational exposure to irritating fumes or dust.

## Other Causes

Sore throat and dry cough can also be associated with smoking, inhalation of foreign particles or irritants, sinus infections, and postnasal drip. In postnasal drip, the nasal mucosa produces excess mucus, which then accumulates in the throat or back of the nose. This can cause a sore throat and cough. Apart from these, gastroesophageal reflux disease can produce soreness in the throat and a dry cough, besides causing difficulty in swallowing.

## Treatment of Dry Cough and Sore Throat

The treatment of these two conditions depends on the underlying causes. If these are caused by bacterial infections, then antibiotics can be used. Cough suppressants and throat lozenges can also help reduce the soreness in the throat.

- Postnasal drip is responsible for causing a sore throat, it can be relieved with the help of decongestants.
- If the pain in the throat is unbearable, you can take painkillers under the supervision of your physician.
- Along with medications, a few simple home remedies can also help reduce coughing and throat soreness.
- For example, you can use slightly warm saline water to gargle your throat two to three times a day.
- Another home remedy for these two conditions is lemon juice.
- Add a few drops of honey to it and drink the mixture.
- You can also mix about 1 to 2 teaspoons apple cider vinegar in a glass of water, and drink the mixture to get relief from the soreness.

## Mononucleosis

Also known as the 'kissing disease', mononucleosis spreads through contact with the saliva of the infected individual. This viral disease is characterized by fever and enlarged lymph nodes, especially in the neck and the armpits. This infectious disease can also cause swollen tonsils, fatigue or malaise, skin rash, and headaches. Mononucleosis is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus, and is more common in teenagers and young adults.

Case of pulmonary fibrosis, the elastic properties of the lungs get affected due to the replacement of elastin by collagen. Collagen is not as elastic as elastin, which affects the ability to lungs to stretch or expand. This leads to reduced compliance. On the other hand, emphysema is characterized by damage to the elastic tissue of the alveolar sacs in the lungs due to enzymes secreted by leukocytes (white blood cells). Smokers are at a high risk for emphysema. The secretion of enzymes occurs due to exposure to irritants from cigarette smoke.

## Emphysema Leads to Poor Elastic Recoil, Which in Turn Leads to High Lung Compliance

People affected by emphysema find it harder to exhale or expel air out of the lungs. As a result, they experience shortness of breath. At times, the alveolar sacs could become filled with fluid due to edema, which in turn might be observed in case of pneumonia or left-sided heart failure. This will also result in reduced lung compliance.

- Steam inhalation is another effective remedy for a sore throat.
- It can help clear up the nasal passage, and promote the expulsion of mucus.

One also needs to take enough rest, and follow a healthy and balanced diet to accelerate the healing process. Many times, installing a humidifier can also provide some relief. But if your cough and throat soreness persist for several days, or if these are accompanied by a high-grade fever, severe pain in the throat, rash, enlarged or swollen lymph nodes in the neck, and blood in saliva, be sure to evaluate the condition immediately with the help of your physician.



“ **John Dean**

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