



Causes and Cure for Cough – Cold – Breathlessness

With growing pollution, cross infections and allergies, even small babies suffer from a range of respiratory complaints: -

1. **Nose block and sneezing:** Very common complaint in early months of life. No drug is required, though simple saline nasal drops may allay the complaints.
2. **Running nose and common cold:** Unavoidable irrespective of care! This viral illness takes a week to settle. Stuffiness, nasal discharge, mild fever, irritability and occasionally cough mark this disease. Keeping warm, plenty of fluids, saline nasal drops & use of mild antipyretics and decongestants is enough.
3. **Cough, throat-ache and fever:** These symptoms evolve from common cold, but they need attention as there is associated bacterial throat infection and appetite also suffers. Judicious use of antibiotics with symptomatic relief is needed. Watch for signs of ear and chest involvement. Steam inhalation is quite useful.
4. **Ear discharge:** Never neglect this complaint as repeated ear infections may lead to deafness. Proper medical attention and supportive treatment is necessary. Never attempt cleaning the ear, as the ear canal is very short in early months.
5. **Breathlessness and chest sounds:** These complaints are on rise and are due to allergic spasm of small airways (also called as childhood asthma / bronchiolitis). The distress and sleep disturbances are quite alarming. Proper understanding of the disease, plenty of fluids, frequent medical supervision, use of bronchodilators (drugs/ inhalers/ nebuliser) and even hospitalization are all required.
6. **Foreign body and respiratory distress:** Usually by 9 months children tend to put small objects in mouth, which may block the airway. This is an emergency and use of back blows with chest thrusts may get the foreign body out. Rush to the hospital. Pneumonia, fluid/ pus in chest, allergic airway spasm are all emergencies.

