Chronic Cough

- Cough is one of the most common reasons for a medical consultation, BUT in most patients cough will resolve in 4-6 weeks
- Chronic cough is defined as cough lasting for more than 8 weeks.

Information Required

- Duration
- Co-morbidities
- Smoking history
- Medications

Investigations Required

- Chest X-ray
- Spirometry
- Full blood count, Renal function, CRP
- Sputum M, C &S
- Nasopharyngeal swab for Bordetella pertussis

Fax Referrals to

FMC Outpatient Clinic  Fax: (08) 8204 6105 (Clinic B)
Noarlunga GP Plus  Fax: (08) 8384 9711

Red Flags

Prompting consideration of other diagnosis, particularly malignancy

- Haemoptysis
- Smoker or Ex-smoker (>20 pack year history) with new cough, altered cough or cough with change in voice
- Abnormal clinical examination (e.g. localised monophonic wheeze, lymph node enlargement)
- Abnormal chest X-ray
- Systemic symptoms such as fever and weight loss

Suggested GP Management

- Smoking cessation
- Treat bacterial bronchitis, if present
- Change ACE inhibitors to another class of hypertensives
- Cough syrups containing non-opioid agents such as dextromethorphan
- Trial of inhaled steroids
- Trial of Proton pump inhibitors (standard dose PPI twice daily for 8-12 weeks)
- Nasal steroids in patients with upper airway symptoms

Clinical Resources


General Information to assist with referrals and the Referral templates for FMC and Noarlunga GP Plus are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients.