

Cough

RFQs

- How is her breathing?
- Is there any asthma in the family?
- Is she growing alright?
- Did this come on suddenly? Could she have choked on something?

Provide

Amber is well despite her cough. Her lungs sound fine and she has no fever now. She is not working hard with her breathing. Most coughs go on for 2 to 3 weeks, and medicine does not seem to help. A wet cough lasting for more than 4 weeks, or a cough occurring with feeds needs to be checked out.

I worry about coughs that come on suddenly, because they can be caused by something getting into the lungs. A peanut, or a bit of a toy, perhaps.

Since there is no family history of asthma, and Amber is not wheezy or breathless let's just check that she is growing OK. If she does get wheezy with colds and exercise, we may need to consider asthma as a diagnosis. It's important that nobody smokes in the house.

Since this is the second time that Amber has had pneumonia let's ask a paediatrician to check her out.

Safety nets:

We need to see Amber urgently if she is working hard with her breathing, or if she has dropped to less than 50% of her normal feeds. Or if she vomits repeatedly.

I would expect her cough to be improving within 2-3 weeks (for a cold). If this is not happening, or if she seems poorly, we should see her again.

(I would expect her cough to be improving within 2-3 days for croup; or within 3 to 4 weeks for bronchiolitis.)

Also we should see her if she has a very high temperature. (Temperature 38.5 °C or above.)

Let us know if she is dropping through her growth lines, or if she is getting wheezy with exercise as well as colds.