

Example of GPs script:

Patient contribution

Tell me more?

So, it's all about the cough, is there anything else that you were worried about? Anything else that you want to talk about today?

ICE

Okay, any other thoughts?

Anything that you were worried might be behind it?

And you weren't concerned that this was a sexually transmissible thing at all?

Otherwise you're not generally thinking that the asthma's come back, but you're thinking that this was probably a cold, I guess?

Was there anything else on your mind?

PSO

You're not a smoker?

And you're living with somebody at the moment?

But you've got a regular relationship?

Red flags

Your weight's been okay?

Focussed history

And you've never suffered with asthma at all in the past?

And you've grown out of that, you think?

Alright, and you've not been particularly wheezy on this occasion, with it?

And how long did that go on for, at a time?

And you're not coughing anything up?

Never vomited with this?

Great. Just remind me on what that was all about? You had a swab taken, didn't you?

And you had some bleeding after intercourse?

Have you had intercourse since then?

It's been absolutely fine?

For contraception, what are you doing?

So, you're planning to conceive?

Have you tried anything for it? Make any difference?

It's disturbing your night's sleep, isn't it?

Focussed examination

Is it sore when I press on your face there, at all?

Open your mouth. Breathe in. Close your mouth. So, not particularly breathless, it doesn't hurt when you breathe at all?

Stand up for me. So, your oxygen levels are really good, your rate of breathing is normal. You don't look out of breath. Breathe away. And again. And again. Okay, your chest sounds absolutely fine – what I'd like you to do, particularly because you used to be asthmatic, is to see how tight your airways are. If you stand up for me, take a deep breath in through your mouth and breathe through that as hard and fast as you can. Right, blow your socks off this time, hard, fast. Go. Okay, one more effort, see if you can improve on that. Okay, so 380.

Identify problem and explain diagnosis

And you're obviously better than you were last week as well. Your lungs sound absolutely fine, there's no sign of a serious chest infection or anything like that.

The fact that you're not a smoker is clearly good news as well, and you sound as if you're improving, compared to last week. The chances are from the description that you've given me so far are that this is just a viral cold.

But there are a couple of things that are worth thinking about. If you have a cough that causes fits of coughing, and you then retch at the end of it, or you have a really nasty spasm with your cough, we think about whooping cough.

But your cough does not sound like that. And also, if you're particularly tight and wheezy with a cough, where your airways are tight, and it takes longer to breathe out, so it's a... that's a wheeze.

Then that could suggest that maybe your asthma is back.

But, you're not out of breath, you've got no signs of a nasty chest infection.

Check understanding

It sounds like it's already on its way out.

That sound okay?

Develops management plan / shares management plan

So, I'd expect that probably, this will settle over the course of the next couple of weeks, alright?

And, probably, there's not much treatment that I can give you that would make any difference to how long this goes on for.

Cough medicines might help a little bit, honey may help a little bit.

Otherwise it should just settle of its own accord.

Safety net and follow up

But if you're breathless, let's see you urgently.

If you're getting coughing spasms and you think 'Oh, yeah maybe it is whooping cough, after all', let me know.

If you're coughing up blood, or if it hurts when you breathe, then let's see you again.

If the cough is no better in a couple of weeks, please let me see you again.