

Living Well with ILD

Best ILD Life Hacks

Created by Stanford's Pulmonary Fibrosis Support Group
Advice for patients from patients

Originally published 1/10/2022

Cough

- Codeine cough syrup (*short-term*)
- Gabapentin (*Needs MD Rx; may cause drowsiness*)
- Transition from one thing to another slowly
(*for example, from sitting to walking, etc*)
- Life savers as an alternative to cough drops
- Slow, deep breaths
- Triggers: talking for a long time, cold weather, smoke, other irritants
(*one member is irritated by newsprint!*)

Mucus/phlegm with cough

- Lemon ginger tea (**Stash** brand)
- Lemon ginger cough drops
- Liquid **Mucinex**® (*easier to swallow than pills*)
- Nebulizer with saline solution (*Needs MD Rx*)

Nausea with Esbriet and/or Ofev

- Zofran (*Needs MD Rx*)
- Talk to your physician about lowering the medication dose

Oxygen

- For tangled tubes:
 1. Swivel joints help the tubing not get overly twisted
 2. Connecting two 25' cords instead of one long 50'
 3. Adding a swivel joint to nasal cannula can also help
- Oxymizer pendant (*available through O₂ provider or online at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)*)

General

- Take it day by day!
- www.pulmonarywellness.org – has pulmonary boot camp
- www.inspire.com – online health community

Other medications we may try for cough

- **Tessalon Perles** (Benzonatate) 100-200mg, three times a day
- **Gabapentin** (*Neurontin*)—Treats nerve-related causes, can also cause drowsiness and dizziness
- **Narcotic cough syrup** (*codeine based*)
- **Prednisone** at low doses (*5-10mg/day*)
- **Investigational drugs:** There are occasional research trials testing new cough medications for patients with ILD

Tips from our Patients for Controlling the Cough!

Cough lozenges—use as soon as you feel cough coming on, OR just before getting on the phone, going to movie, etc. Try to find sugar-free versions. One Occupational Therapist speaker suggested avoiding menthol-based products because of their drying properties and possible irritating effect on cough- some below do have menthol

- **Slippery elm**—Available at health foods stores
- **Black Elderberry lozenges**—www.naturesway.com
- **HALLS Mentho-Lyptus**—honey lemon flavored; menthol cough suppressant oral anesthetic with advance vapor action
- **Fisherman's Friend**- original extra strong, extra soothing, all natural cough suppressant/oral anesthetic lozenge
- **Mucinex®** lozenges (*sugar free*)
- **Walgreens Cherry cough drops** (*have menthol – check sugar*)

Herbal Cough Syrup: ‘Osha Root Complex Syrup’ and ‘Singers Saving Grace’ throat spray from www.herbsetc.com

Black Licorice bites or **Licorice Tea:** there is a small amount of data on the cough suppressant properties of licorice. Some patients report that sucking on the short ‘bites’ of black licorice helps their cough (*beware sugar!*). Other options are boiling licorice to make tea.

Ginger Tea: boiling raw ginger to make tea

Hot Water with lemon and honey

Sips of Ice Cold Water at first ‘tickle’ of cough

Gargling with Hot Salt Water in the morning and evening (1/2 tsp salt in cup of water)

Maintain Adequate Oxygenation (*some of our patients say their cough worsens if their oxygen levels drop*)

Turn up oxygen during coughing spells

Try strategies to calm yourself and slow your breathing when coughing attacks occur