

# Trainer's Guide to Respiratory Infections

## Respiratory Infections:

1. Respiratory infections affect the air passages: the nasal passages, throat and the lungs.
2. They are of two types:
  - a. **Upper respiratory**, affecting the nose and throat: the flu and colds.
  - b. **Lower respiratory**: affecting the lungs: H1N1, Covid 19, pneumonia and bronchitis.

They can be either Chronic or Acute:

**3. Chronic** Respiratory infections appear **over time** and are long-lasting, incurable or recurrent. They include:

- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Asthma,
- Respiratory allergies
- Occupational lung diseases

**4. Acute Respiratory Infections** (ARIs) are the leading cause of death in children under 5.

ARI have **a shorter life** span of up to 90 days. They can be treated and typically affect children.

Children that are of low-birth weight, malnourished, who do not breastfeed, who are immune compromised, and who live in overcrowded conditions are at a higher risk of getting and dying from an ARI.

## General Symptoms:

1. Regular, sometimes severe coughing
2. Rapid or difficult breathing
3. Fever
4. Chills
5. Wheezing
6. Loss of appetite
7. Stuffy nose, sneezing regularly
8. Sore throat
9. Blocked sinus

## Severe Pneumonia:

1. The chest may move in during inhalation (the chest expands in a healthy person).
2. Unable to eat or drink easily.

## Prevention:

1. If sick, stay away from school/work for a few days.
2. Avoid people with the symptoms of an ARI.
3. Cough/sneeze into your shoulder to avoid the spread of germs and droplets.
4. Wash hands with soap regularly / use sanitizer.
5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
6. Ensure rooms are well ventilated
7. Ensure kitchens are not smoky.
8. Keep warm in the winter with thick clothing, shoes and socks.
9. Adequate nutrition to boost immunity.
10. Full immunization record.
11. Take vitamin C tablets or plenty of fruit.

## Transmission:

ARIs are caused by viruses, bacteria and fungi, which are transmitted by:

1. Physical contact with infected individuals.
2. Through breathing in droplets and small germs produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
3. By an individual touching something with their hands (a surface or object) with the virus or bacteria on it and then touching their nose or mouth.
4. Lack of regular handwashing with soap or use of sanitizer.

## Treatment/Cure (Upper ARI):

Upper respiratory infections will take care of themselves, but drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and ease soreness of throat and stay warm. Paracetamol can be given to reduce fevers, aches and pains and **keep eating as much as possible**, particularly Vitamin C or fruit. Keep breast feeding.

## Treatment/Cure (Lower ARI):

Lower infections are more serious, especially if accompanied by a fever for more than one week or tight chest with green phlegm. If this is the case, go to a clinic immediately. Antibiotics can be used to treat pneumonia. If short of breath treat as an emergency.