

- Virus

Medical experts answer questions about cough, COVID-19 in webinar

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THE dangers of misinformation have become another threat amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Due to lack of proper knowledge, people tend to be confused and paranoid about the symptoms, modes of transmission, and ways to prevent the virus.

How does a regular cough differ from one that's caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus? Is there a sure solution for COVID-19? Can over-the-counter (OTC) drugs help? Through the Kwentong Viral News webinar, three medical experts shed light on these common questions about COVID-19 and cough. Coughing is the body's natural reflex to get rid of unwanted elements like smoke, dust, and other irritants as well as phlegm in the airways and lungs.

"Essentially, cough is a sign of an underlying problem or sickness," said Dr. Earl Sempio, a biochemist and pulmonologist.

Acute infectious coughs are caused by bacteria or viral infections that are usually accompanied by fever, body pain, and other signs of infection.

Contrary to misconceptions, there's no single indicator whether a cough is COVID-19-related or not.

"It's not easy to determine whether a cough is due to COVID-19 or not, so if you have a cough, it's better to protect others and self-isolate," said Dr. Joseph Adrian Buensalido, an infectious diseases specialist. "Even doctors cannot certainly say that a patient has COVID-19 without testing."

COVID-19 cases can be classified as mild, moderate, severe or critical depending on the severity of symptoms.

Dr. Buensalido likened mild COVID-19 cases to common cold or flu, which can be managed and treated at home with proper rest and intake of fluids. However, proper isolation should still be strictly observed in order to prevent the spread of the virus to other members of the household.

OTC medicines such as carbocisteine can be helpful to relieve symptoms like coughs with thick and hard to expel phlegm while supplements like zinc can help strengthen the immune system to fight off viruses and bacteria.

Mucolytics like carbocisteine help clear the chest by making phlegm (mucus) less sticky and easier to cough up. Additionally, Dr. Gwen Agra, internist and pulmonologist, also cited a study where carbocisteine was proven to lessen the growth of rhinovirus (common cold) in cultured human airway cells and decrease inflammatory chemicals. "It means carbocisteine has a bit of an anti-inflammatory effect and it helps suppress viruses like the common cold and influenza," she added.

Zinc, on the other hand, is crucial for growth, development, and maintenance of immune function. In fact, there are several studies that show how zinc can help resolve the common cold faster due to its action on immunity.

The mucolytic and anti-inflammatory properties of carbocisteine combined with the right levels of Zinc for immunity is definitely a powerful combination against coughs caused by viral infections.