

Cough: Outpatient Care Protocol

Alarm features J1, J6, B1

Uncomplicated cough can be managed at outpatient clinic by providing symptomatic treatment. However, cough associated with alarm features should be immediately referred to hospital for prompt diagnosis and treatment. The alarm features are:

- Cough with dyspnea at rest or mild activity
- Cough accompanied with breathlessness and coughing up pink frothy mucus
- Intractable cough
- History of inhalation of foreign body in the lung
- Persistent cough in patients with co-existing respiratory / cardiovascular disease
- Cough with blood (hemoptysis)
- Cough with tachycardia, tachypnea, and / or high fever
- Cough with unexplained weight loss with fevers and night chills
- Cough with associated cyanosis
- Persistent cough not responsive to empirical therapy/ drug treatment
- Cough with stridor (retropharyngeal abscess)

Note: Identification of underlying pathology may warrant other potential reasons for referral.