

# Hiccups

Most people get hiccups sometimes. Hiccups usually only last a few minutes and go away without treatment.

## Stopping or preventing hiccups

Hiccups usually go away on their own. But there are things you can try to stop or prevent hiccups. These things may not work for everyone.

### Do

- ✓ breathe into a paper bag - do not put the bag over your head
- ✓ pull your knees up to your chest and lean forward
- ✓ sip very cold water
- ✓ swallow some granulated sugar
- ✓ bite on a lemon
- ✓ take a teaspoon of vinegar
- ✓ hold your breath for a short time

### Don't

- ✗ do not drink alcoholic, fizzy or hot drinks
- ✗ do not chew gum or smoke - these can cause you to swallow air
- ✗ do not eat spicy food

- ✗ do not eat food very quickly
- ✗ do not eat or drink something very cold immediately after something hot

## Why we get hiccups

Often there is no clear cause of hiccups.

Things that may trigger hiccups include:

- eating and drinking
- stress
- strong emotions, such as excitement

In rare cases, hiccups can last longer than a few minutes.

Hiccups that last longer than 2 days can be caused by a:

- health condition
- certain medicines

### Contact your GP if your hiccups:

- last longer than 2 days
- come back very often and affect your life

## Treatment from your GP

Your GP can check if a health condition or medicine causes your hiccups.

If they find a cause, they may recommend:

- treatment for the condition
- changing your medicine

Your GP may prescribe a medicine called chlorpromazine if:

- your hiccups last longer than 2 days
- there is no obvious cause

But not everyone can take chlorpromazine. In rare cases, they may prescribe baclofen.

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