



Washington
University in St. Louis

What is Phlegm?

It's important to work with a healthcare professional to determine the underlying cause of phlegm and develop an appropriate treatment plan. In some cases, phlegm may be a sign of a more serious condition, such as pneumonia or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), that requires medical attention.



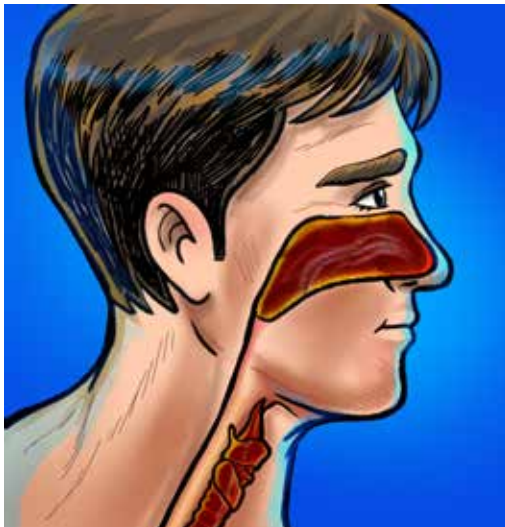
Jay F. Piccirillo, MD.

Phlegm is a thick, sticky mucus that is produced in the respiratory system, particularly in the lungs and airways. Excess phlegm is a common symptom of respiratory infections, allergies, and other conditions that cause inflammation of the respiratory system. Treatment of excess phlegm depends on the underlying cause. Here are some general strategies for managing and treating excess phlegm:



1. Hydration: Drinking plenty of fluids, such as water, tea, and warm broth, can help thin the mucus and make it easier to cough up.

2. Steam therapy: Inhaling steam can help loosen and thin out



the mucus. You can take a hot shower or bath, use a humidifier, or breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water.

3. Coughing techniques: Proper coughing techniques can help clear the mucus from the lungs and airways. This involves taking deep breaths and coughing from the diaphragm.

4. Medications: Over-the-counter medications, such as expectorants, decongestants, and antihistamines, can help manage symptoms of phlegm. Prescription medications may also be needed to treat underlying conditions.

5. Lifestyle changes: Avoiding exposure to irritants, such as

cigarette smoke, and maintaining good hygiene can help prevent respiratory infections and reduce symptoms of excess phlegm. It's important to work with a healthcare professional to determine the underlying cause of excess phlegm and develop an appropriate treatment plan. In some cases, excess phlegm may be a sign of a more serious condition, such as pneumonia or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), that requires medical attention.

