

Hiccups

WHAT ARE HICCUPS?

Generally, hiccups only last a few minutes and are totally harmless. These are called **benign hiccups**. We all get them, even foetuses and other mammals.

There are several types of hiccups, for example **persistent hiccups** last more than 48 hours and **refractory hiccups** last more than 1 month. **Chronic hiccups** can continue for several months or even several years. The record is held by Charles Osborne, who had hiccups for 68 years!

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

The causes of hiccups are similar to those of burping. They can be triggered by the consumption of **fizzy drinks**, an excessively **large meal**, **eating too quickly** or **swallowing air** while eating.

All of these things cause **gastric distension** or stretching of the stomach. This distension irritates the diaphragm, which is located beside the stomach. As a result, air has trouble getting into the trachea and lungs. This triggers a vibration in the vocal cords and the epiglottis.

The medical term used for hiccups is **diaphragmatic myoclonus**. 'Myo' from muscle, and clonus is a short, involuntary jerk and diaphragmatic is related to the diaphragm, so this literally means '**short, involuntary muscle jerk of the diaphragm**'.

Keywords >

diaphragmatic myoclonus

'myo': muscle

'clonus': short, involuntary jerk

'diaphragmatic': related to the diaphragm

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Hiccups

Hiccups are harmless.

- True
- False

All mammals can get hiccups.

- True
- False

Even a foetus in the womb can have hiccups.

- True
- False

Persistent hiccups can last longer than...

- 1 hour
- 24 hours
- 48 hours

Refractory hiccups last longer than...

- 3 days
- 2 weeks
- 1 month

What are hiccups called when they last several months or more?

- Too many hiccups
- Chronic hiccups
- Recurring hiccups

Charles Osborne holds the record for the longest bout of hiccups. How long did they last?

- 47 years
- 56 years
- 68 years

Hiccups can be caused by eating a meal too quickly.

- True
- False

What do we call a distension of the stomach that causes hiccups?

- Gastric distension
- Gastric expansion
- A gastric bug

Gastric distension can irritate...

- the liver
- the diaphragm
- the oesophagus

Answers

Hiccups are harmless.

- True**
Well done! That's right.
- False**
Wrong! Hiccups are completely harmless.

All mammals can get hiccups.

- True**
Well done! That's right.
- False**
Wrong! That's not the right answer.

Even a foetus in the womb can have hiccups.

- True**
Well done! That's right.
- False**
Wrong! A foetus can have hiccups.

Persistent hiccups can last longer than...

- 1 hour**
Wrong! It's a lot more.
- 24 hours**
Wrong! It's more than that.
- 48 hours**
Well done! That's right!

Refractory hiccups last longer than...

- 3 days**
Wrong! It's a lot more.
- 2 weeks**
Wrong! It's more than that.
- 1 month**
Well done! That's right!

What are hiccups called when they last several months or more?

- Too many hiccups**
Wrong! Nice try, though.
- Chronic hiccups**
Well done! That's right.
- Recurring hiccups**
Wrong! That's not the right answer.

Charles Osborne holds the record for the longest bout of hiccups. How long did they last?

- 47 years**
Wrong! It's a lot more.
- 56 years**
Wrong! It's more than that.
- 68 years**
Well done! That's right!

Hiccups can be caused by eating a meal too quickly.

- True**
Well done! Eating a meal too quickly causes the stomach to stretch and this modifies the journey air makes in the respiratory tract.
- False**
Wrong! Too bad, that's not the right answer.

What do we call a distension of the stomach that causes hiccups?

- Gastric distension**
Well done! That's right.
- Gastric expansion**
Wrong! That's not right.
- A gastric bug**
Wrong! Nice try, though!

Gastric distension can irritate...

- the liver**
Wrong! Try again!
- the diaphragm**
Well done! It modifies the journey air makes in your respiratory tract.
- the oesophagus**
Wrong! That's not right.