

Acute (serious) Bronchitis



This is an infection of the air tubes that go down to your lungs.



It often follows a cold or the flu.



Most people do not need treatment for this.



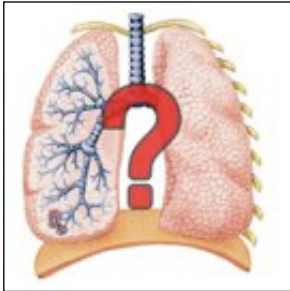
The infection normally goes away in 7-10 days.



We make every effort to make sure the information is correct (right).

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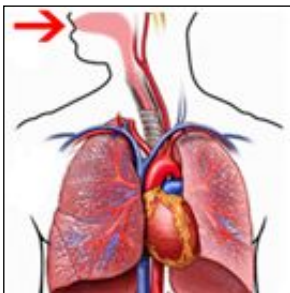
Getting Acute Bronchitis



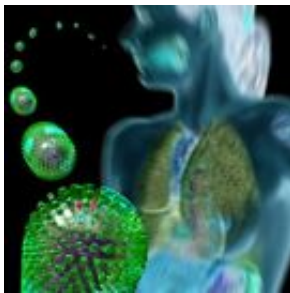
How the lungs work



Your lungs are like two large sponges filled with tubes.



As you breathe in, you suck oxygen through your nose and mouth into a tube in your neck.



Bacteria and viruses in the air can travel into your lungs.

Normally, this does not cause a problem as your body kills the bacteria, or viruses.



However, sometimes infection can get through.



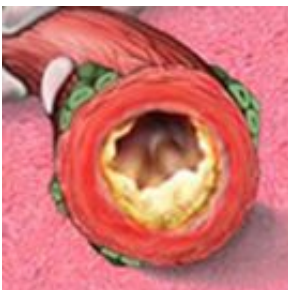
If you smoke or if you have had another illness, infections are more likely to get through.



Acute Bronchitis



Acute bronchitis is when the large airways (breathing tubes) to the lungs get inflamed (swollen and sore).



The infection makes the airways swell and you get a build up of phlegm (thick mucus).

Coughing is a way of getting the phlegm out of your airways.



The cough can sometimes last for up to 3 weeks.



Acute Bronchitis usually goes away on its own and does not need treatment.



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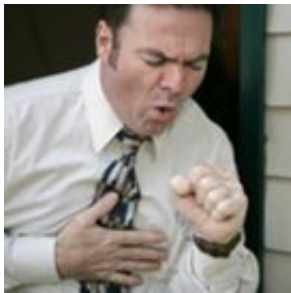
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Symptoms

(feelings that show you may have the illness)



Symptoms of Acute Bronchitis include:



- A chesty cough



- Coughing up mucus, which is usually yellow, or green



- Breathlessness when doing more energetic activities



- Wheeziness



- Dry mouth



- High temperature



- Headache



- Loss of appetite



The cough usually lasts between 7-10 days.

But it can last up to 3 weeks.



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Treatment



The infection will probably go away on its own in 7-10 days.



Things you can do to make yourself feel better:



- **Drink plenty of liquids (like water)**



- **Painkillers from the pharmacist** - like paracetamol, and ibuprofen, can help to lower your high temperature.



- **Stop smoking** - if you smoke it irritates your lungs and will make you cough more.



Cough medicines are not suggested.

Coughing helps you to clear the mucus.

If you don't cough, your infection could last longer.



A warm drink of honey and lemon can help make it less painful when you cough.



Antibiotics (a type of medicine) are not normally suggested for Acute Bronchitis



Antibiotics only tend to work for Acute Bronchitis **if:**



- You are 75 years old or older and have a fever (high temperature)



- You already have problems with your lungs, or heart.



- **Your body is not strong in fighting off infections because you have: diabetes, cancer, or you have had treatment such as chemotherapy**



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Complications



Acute Bronchitis can sometimes give you another infection in your lungs.



If you get another infection, this may be more serious than the Acute Bronchitis.



It can usually be treated using antibiotics.



Sometimes, Acute Bronchitis can lead to a disease called Pneumonia.



You should see your doctor if:



- Your fever (high temperature) gets worse



- You become unusually drowsy (sleepy) or confused



- You get chest pains



- Your breathing suddenly becomes faster



- You become short of breath



- Your cough lasts more than 3 weeks



- **If you keep getting Acute Bronchitis**



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Making Sure You Do Not Get a Chest Infection



It is impossible to avoid bacteria and germs.



However you can try and stay healthy by:



- Eating healthy food (lots of fruit and vegetables)



- Exercising



- Drinking lots of water



- Getting lots of sleep



- Don't drink too much tea or coffee



- Don't drink too much alcohol



Flu Jabs



If you have had either Acute Bronchitis, or Pneumonia, your doctor may suggest you have a flu jab.

This should help you avoid any infections.



Flu jabs are normally suggested for the following people:



- People over 65 years of age



- People with either long-term breathing, heart, kidney, or liver conditions



- People with diabetes



- People with a disease called Sickle-Cell Anaemia



- People with immune system conditions, such as HIV



- Children under 5 years old



Hygiene



Make sure that you cover your mouth when you cough, or sneeze.



Wash your hands regularly.



Also, throw away used tissues immediately.



Stop Smoking



If you are a smoker, the best thing you can do is to stop.

Smoking damages your lungs.

If you smoke, you won't be able to fight off infections so well.



If you would like to give up smoking, the NHS Smoking Helpline will be able to offer you advice and encouragement.

You can call 0800 169 0 169, or visit the 'Go smokefree' website. www.smokefree.nhs.uk



Your doctor, or pharmacist, will also be able to provide you with help and advice.



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