



HEALTH INFORMATION

Bronchitis

What is Bronchitis?

Acute bronchitis is an infection of the bronchi - the large airways. Acute bronchitis is common and is usually due to a viral infection.

What are the symptoms of acute bronchitis?

The main symptom is cough. You may also develop fever, headache, cold symptoms, and aches and pains. Symptoms typically peak after 2-3 days and then gradually clear. However, it commonly takes 2-3 weeks for the cough to go completely after the other symptoms have gone. This is because inflammation in the airways caused by the infection may take some time to settle.

What symptoms should I look out for?

Acute bronchitis usually clears without complications. Occasionally, the infection travels to the lung tissue to cause pneumonia. Consult a doctor if any of the following occur:

- If fever, wheezing or headaches become worse or severe
- If you develop: fast breathing, shortness of breath, or chest pains
- If you cough up blood or if your sputum (phlegm) becomes dark or rusty coloured

- If you become drowsy or confused
- If a cough persists longer than 3-4 weeks
- If you have recurring bouts of acute bronchitis
- If any other symptom develops that you are concerned about

What is the treatment for acute bronchitis?

A main aim of treatment is to ease symptoms whilst your immune system clears the infection.

The most useful treatments are:

- Take paracetamol, ibuprofen, or aspirin
- Have lots to drink if you have a fever, to prevent mild dehydration
- If you smoke, you should try to stop for good

