

## ACUTE BRONCHITIS

### What is acute bronchitis?

When you have acute bronchitis, the air passages between your windpipe and your lungs are swollen and irritated. You have a bad cough and pain in your chest when you breathe deeply or cough.

### How does it happen?

Acute bronchitis is most often caused by a virus, like a cold or the flu. It can also be caused by bacteria. Most of the time, it clears up in a few days. It may take you longer to get better if:

- You smoke cigarettes.
- You have a heart or lung disease.
- You live in an area where air pollution is a problem.
- You have any other health problems.

### What are the symptoms?

You may:

- Have a deep cough with yellowish or greenish phlegm.
- Feel pain behind your breastbone when you breathe deeply or cough.
- Wheeze and feel short of breath.
- Have a fever or chills.

### How do I know if I have it?

Your health care provider will:

- Ask how you are feeling.
- Give you an exam.

You may have a chest x-ray or other tests.

### How can I take care of myself?

Resting at home and drinking plenty of fluids to keep the mucus loose may be all you need to do to get better in a few days. If your symptoms are severe or you have other health problems (such as heart or lung disease or diabetes), you may need to take antibiotics.

You should also:

- Stop smoking if you smoke.
- Avoid smoky places.

You may want to ask your health care provider about taking medicine for cough or fever.

Call your health care provider if:

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have a fever over 101°F (38.3°C)
- You cough up blood.
- You don't start to feel better in 3 days or you are feeling worse.

### **How can I prevent acute bronchitis?**

You can lower your chances of getting bronchitis if you don't smoke.