

Acute Bronchitis



Acute bronchitis is an inflammation of the bronchial tubes, which are the airways that carry oxygen to your lungs. Bronchitis usually occurs after a cold or other respiratory infection. It generally starts suddenly and is usually short-lived.

What causes acute bronchitis?

Acute bronchitis is mainly caused by a viral infection. It affects the nose, sinuses, and throat. It then spreads to the airways.

What are the symptoms?

- Chest discomfort
- Fatigue
- Mild headache and body aches
- Sore throat
- Mild fever and chills

Seek medical attention if:

You have symptoms such as coughing up blood, fever for 3 days or more, difficulty breathing, or thick, greenish phlegm.

How is acute bronchitis diagnosed?

- **Chest X-ray** – helps identify if you have pneumonia.
- **Physical examination** – to listen to your lungs as you breathe.
- **Pulse oximetry** – measures the amount of oxygen in your blood.



How is acute bronchitis treated?

It usually goes away on its own, without treatment. In addition, you can take certain measures at home to feel better, such as resting, drinking fluids, and using over the counter (OTC) medications and inhaled medications (albuterol), among others.

What steps can you take to feel better?

- Use a humidifier.
- Cover your face when it is cold.

How can you prevent the risk of contracting acute bronchitis?

You can prevent acute bronchitis by taking the following measures, such as washing your hands frequently, getting vaccinated against certain diseases, avoiding contact with people who have symptoms of viral infection, and wearing a mask, among others.

Social and Emotional Aspects

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary doctor or call the following hotlines:

Medical Advice Line 1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health 787-641-9133

References:

<https://www.merckmanuals.com/es-us/professional/trastornos-pulmonares/bronquitis-aguda/bronquitis-aguda>
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/bronchitis/symptoms-causes/syc-20355566>

Prepared by Licensed Health Educators.

Reviewed in January 2026.

©First Medical Health Plan, Inc.