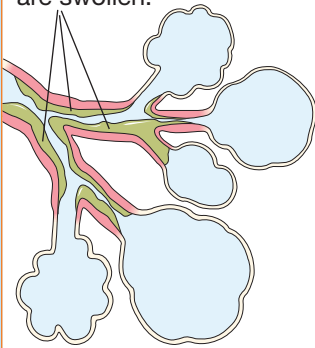




**Acute bronchitis** is swelling of the air passages of the lung. **Chronic bronchitis** is swelling of the air passages of the lung that persists for a long time or occurs again and again.

With bronchitis, air passages in the lungs are swollen.



Get more  
information  
from:

HealthyLearn®  
[www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com)

American Lung  
Association  
800.LUNG.USA  
(586.4872)  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

## Bronchitis

### Signs & Symptoms

#### For Acute Bronchitis

- A cough starts out dry. Then mucus or phlegm come with the cough. Hoarseness or a sore throat can also occur.
- Chills. Fever less than 102° F.
- Feeling of pressure behind the breastbone or a burning feeling in the chest.

These symptoms can last from 3 days to 3 weeks. They go away when the acute episode is over.

#### For Chronic Bronchitis

- A cough with mucus or phlegm for 3 or more months at a time. This occurs for more than 2 years in a row.
- Shortness of breath with exertion (in early stages).
- Shortness of breath at rest (in later stages).

Many people, most of them smokers, develop emphysema (destruction of the air sacs) with chronic bronchitis. This is **chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**.

### Causes

#### For Acute Bronchitis

- A viral or bacterial infection.
- Pollutants, such as smog.

These attack the mucus membranes within the windpipe or air passages in your respiratory tract leaving them red and inflamed. Acute bronchitis often develops after a cold or other respiratory infection.

#### For Chronic Bronchitis

- Cigarette smoking. This is the most common cause.
- Air pollution.
- Repeated infections of the air passages in the lungs.

Chronic bronchitis causes permanent damage to the respiratory tract. It can make you more prone to respiratory infections like acute bronchitis and pneumonia. Chronic bronchitis is not contagious.



## Bronchitis, Continued

### Treatment

#### For Acute Bronchitis

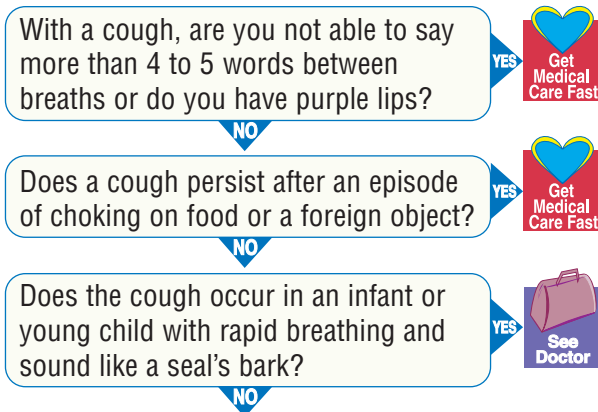
Most of the time, this type is caused by a virus and goes away without treatment. Sometimes, a doctor may prescribe:

- Bronchodilators. These medicines open up air passages in the lungs.
- An antibiotic if you smoke, are older than age 40, or if you have a condition or take medication that makes it hard for you to fight infections.

#### For Chronic Bronchitis

- Not smoking. Avoiding secondhand smoke.
- Avoiding or reducing exposure to air pollution, chemical irritants, and cold, wet weather.
- Medical treatment as needed, for airway infections and heart problems.
- Oxygen, as prescribed.

### Questions to Ask



Flowchart continued in next column

With a cough, do you have any of these symptoms?

- **Fever.** (See at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com).)
- Green, yellow, or bloody-colored mucus.
- Severe or increasing chest pain.
- Shortness of breath at rest and at noncoughing times.
- Vomiting more than once.



NO

Have you had a cough longer than 3 weeks and has it not gotten better?



NO



### Self-Care / Prevention

- Don't smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Reduce your exposure to air pollution. Use air conditioning, air filters, and a mouth and nose filter mask if you have to. Stay indoors during episodes of heavy air pollution.
- Rest. Drink plenty of liquids.
- Breathe air from a cool-mist vaporizer. Bacteria grows in vaporizers, so clean your unit after each use. Breathing in mist with bacteria can make bronchitis worse. Use distilled (not tap) water in the vaporizer.
- Take an over-the-counter medicine for fever, pain, and/or inflammation as directed.
- Instead of cough suppressants, use expectorants.
- Use bronchodilators and/or take antibiotics as prescribed by your doctor. **{Note:}** See information “Cough Suppressant” and “Decongestant” use at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com). }