

Title: Acute Bronchitis

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Abstract:

Acute bronchitis is a common cause of illness involving coughing. It is usually due to a viral infection, which usually runs its course within 7-10 days. There is no test for diagnosing it, though your doctor may perform certain tests to look for other causes of your symptoms. Treatment is aimed at helping your body fight the infection by getting plenty of rest and fluids. Adults may use acetaminophen or aspirin to reduce fever if present, though aspirin should NOT be given to children. Antibiotics are not usually necessary.

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Acute Bronchitis

Causes and Treatment



What you need to know about acute bronchitis:

- Common cause of acute cough
 - Usually due to viral infection
 - Typically resolves within 7-10 days
 - Best treatment is rest and fluids
 - Antibiotics not usually necessary
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WHAT IS BRONCHITIS?

Bronchitis is inflammation of the lower airways that lead to the lungs. This can cause many symptoms including coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and fever.

ACUTE VS. CHRONIC

There are two very different types of bronchitis: acute and chronic. Acute bronchitis is typically caused by an infection and lasts only a few days to weeks. Chronic bronchitis is often associated with cigarette smoking and lasts months to years.



DIAGNOSIS

There is no single test that can diagnose acute bronchitis. Instead, your doctor will determine how likely it is based on your symptoms, risk factors, and an examination of your chest and lungs.

If the diagnosis cannot be made on this information alone, your doctor may order tests to look for other causes of your illness. This could include an x-ray of your chest, obtaining a sputum sample to check for bacteria, or drawing blood for further testing.



TREATMENT

Since acute bronchitis is usually caused by a viral infection, treatment is aimed at helping your body fight that infection:

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Get plenty of rest
- Do not smoke

Adults may take acetaminophen or aspirin to reduce fever if present. Children may take acetaminophen, but should NOT take aspirin.

If there is concern for bacterial infection, your doctor may prescribe antibiotics. If that is the case, it is important to take them exactly as prescribed.

More information on this topic can be found on MEDLINE Plus:

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001087.htm>