

Date: 5/27/2008 Patient: Elizabeth Test

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## **Acute Bronchitis: Brief Version**

### **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 or 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 have been 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 help prevent acute bronchitis?**

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

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