



Symptom relief for acute bronchitis or “chest cold”

The clinician has diagnosed you with acute bronchitis, which may also be referred to as a chest cold. Supportive measures may help you feel better until the virus has run its course.

SYMPTOMS

Sore throat	What is acute bronchitis? Acute bronchitis is a virus; antibiotics will not help you. Your bronchial tree (the tubes that carry air into your lungs) is inflamed. When this occurs, your airways swell and mucus forms inside them, which makes it hard to breathe. A clinician may take a chest x-ray to rule out pneumonia, which is more serious than bronchitis.
Fever	
Cough that brings up clear, yellow or green mucus	
Chest congestion	
Shortness of breath	
Wheezing	
Chills	
Mild body aches	
Watery eyes	
Fatigue (feeling tired)	
Mild headache	
Can occur after an upper respiratory infection	

What Can You Do?

- Drink fluids, but avoid caffeine and alcohol — water is nature’s best way to clear mucus
- Get plenty of rest
- Don’t smoke

To feel better faster, over-the-counter medications, rest and fluids can help.

Your clinician suggests you take the following:

- A prescription inhaler** for wheezing, which will help open up your airways and breathe easier.
- A prescription for an **inhaled steroid inhaler**, which can help with airway swelling and wheezing.
- Acetaminophen** (Tylenol®) for pain, inflammation and to lower fever.
Take the following dose: _____
- Ibuprofen** for pain and discomfort, inflammation, and fever if greater than 101°F.
Take the following dose: _____
- Guaifenesin** (such as Robitussin®, Mucofen®, Mucinex®, Humibid LA® or Humibid-e®) to help thin the mucus and help it drain. Take the following dose: _____

Go back to your doctor if you have:

- Fever higher than 100.4 °F and if it stays up despite using fever reducing medications like Tylenol and Ibuprofen
- Cough with bloody mucus
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks

References:

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (17 April 2024). Chest cold (Acute bronchitis) basics. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved July 18, 2024 from https://www.cdc.gov/acute-bronchitis/about/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/bronchitis.html
2. Bailey, L. (November 2023). Acute bronchitis. Family Doctor. Retrieved July 18, 2024 from <https://familydoctor.org/condition/acute-bronchitis/>