



## Symptom relief for acute bronchitis or “chest cold”

The doctor has diagnosed you with acute bronchitis, which may also be referred to as a chest cold. Supportive treatments may help you feel better until the virus has ran it course.

### SYMPTOMS

Sore throat
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 is acute bronchitis?

Acute bronchitis means you have been diagnosed with 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 provider may take a chest x-ray to rule out pneumonia, which is more serious than bronchitis.

### What does this mean?

- Drink fluids, but avoid caffeine and alcohol. Water is nature’s best way to clear mucus.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Increase the humidity in your home or use a humidifier.
- Don’t smoke.

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

Your provider 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
- Ibuprofen** for pain and discomfort, inflammation, and fever if greater than 101°F.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Honey** for coughing in children older than 1-year-old.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cough drops/lozenges** if older than 4 years old for sore throat.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Cough or cold medications** if older than 4-6 years old.  
Take the following dose: \_\_\_\_\_
- Guafenesin** (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
- Cough with bloody mucus
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks – if it's just the cough, wait a couple of weeks longer

## References:

1. Get Smart Campaign, [cdc.gov/getsmart](http://cdc.gov/getsmart), 9/25/17
2. [familydoctor.org](http://familydoctor.org), Acute Bronchitis, 9/25/17