

Acute Bronchitis: Brief Version

What is acute bronchitis?

When you have acute bronchitis, the airways between your windpipe and your lungs are swollen and irritated. It is also called a chest cold.

What is the cause?

Acute bronchitis is most often caused by a virus, like a cold or the flu. Less often, it can be caused by bacteria.

Most of the time, it clears up in several days, but the cough can take longer to go away. It may take you longer to get better if:

- You smoke cigarettes.
- You have a heart or lung disease or other health problems.
- There's a lot of air pollution or secondhand smoke where you live or work.

What are the symptoms?

You may:

- Have a deep cough with yellowish or greenish mucus.
- Feel pain in your chest when you breathe deeply or cough.
- Wheeze or feel short of breath.
- Have a fever or chills.

How can I take care of myself?

Rest at home and drink plenty of fluids to keep the mucus loose. Don't smoke, and stay away from others who are smoking. You should get better in a several days.

If your symptoms are severe or you have heart or lung disease or diabetes, you may need to see your healthcare provider or take medicine.

How can I help prevent acute bronchitis?

You can lower your chances of getting bronchitis if you wash your hands after using the restroom, coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. Also wash your hands before eating or touching your eyes.

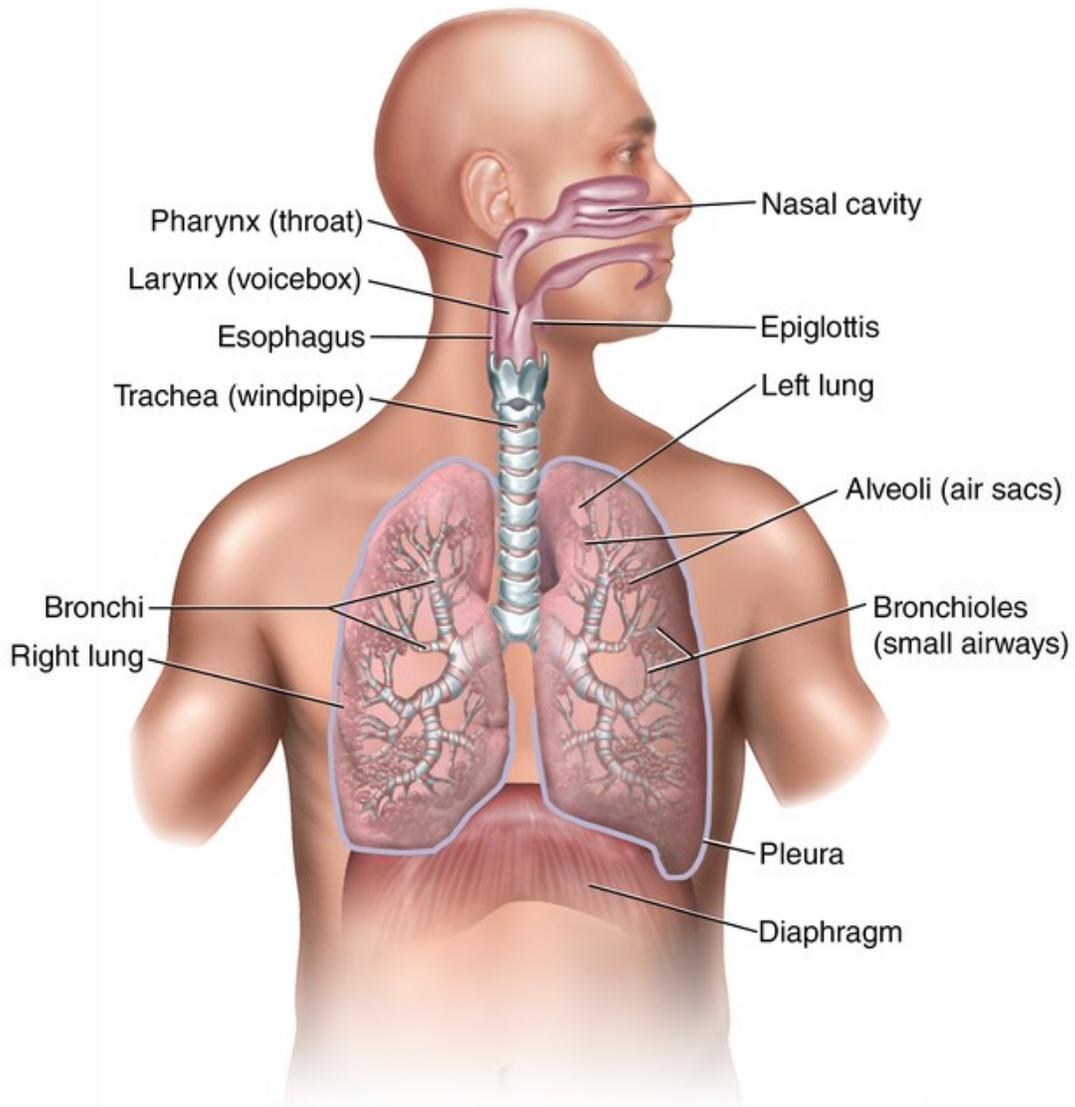
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Respiratory System



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