6 TIPS for managing bronchitis

Bronchitis occurs when the airways of the lungs swell and produce mucus. Symptoms may include coughing, chest soreness, feeling tired, mild headache, body aches, watery eyes and sore throat. The infection typically lasts several weeks. If your doctor diagnosed you with acute bronchitis, there are some treatments to help manage symptoms.

1 **Bronchitis is usually a viral infection,** which means that antibiotics won't work on these types of infections. Taking unnecessary antibiotics can cause harmful side effects, not help you feel better, and create antibiotic resistance (bacteria mutate and are able to resist effects of antibiotics).

2 **Let your body rest.** Limit strenuous activities and increase sleep. Drink warm liquids, such as water or tea, to loosen mucus (avoid milk products which may thicken mucus). A humidifier or steam vaporizer may also help with the mucus.

3 **Consider wearing a face mask or scarf over your nose and mouth outdoors** if the weather is cold. Chilly air can often irritate your cough and cause shortness of breath.

4 **Avoid smoking** and exposure to second-hand smoke.

5 Talk to your doctor about using **over-the-counter medications,** such as cough suppressants, antihistamines and decongestants.

6 Contact your primary care physician if you have the following:

- Temperature higher than 100.4°F.
- Cough with bloody mucus.
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing.
- Symptoms that last more than 3 weeks.
- See your doctor if you have asthma or COPD.

If symptoms persist or worsen, contact your primary care physician.

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