

What is Bronchitis?

LORRIN

Today we are going to talk about Bronchitis

DANIEL

Oh! I know how to draw one of those!

LORRIN

Uhh, no, not a brachiosaurus! Bronchitis affects the bronchi – the airways in the lungs. It causes inflammation and makes more mucus, or phlegm, which is that yucky stuff you cough up sometimes. Bronchitis is most often caused by a virus or bacteria, but it can sometimes be caused by things around us like allergens, chemical fumes, cigarette smoke and dust.

DANIEL

I've been around all those things! Oh no, I have Bronchitis!!

LORRIN

While not all kids with bronchitis have these symptoms, the most common symptom is a frequent cough. Sometimes, you might have back and muscle pain, too.

DANIEL

Nope, pain free.

LORRIN

The cough may start out dry, but then turn yucky with green or yellow mucus.

DANIEL

Nothin' disgustin'!

LORRIN

Fever, sometimes with chills and a general feeling of being sick.

DANIEL

Cool as a cucumber!

LORRIN

Pressure or tightness in the chest and a running nose.

What is Bronchitis?

DANIEL

Nope, still here. Nose hasn't run away yet!

(Sound of Daniel laughing)

LORRIN

Shortness of breath, sore throat and wheezing (which is like a squeaking or high-pitched soft whistle coming from your lungs when you breathe.)

DANIEL

All right!!! I DO NOT have Bronchitis!!

LORRIN

Well, our patient does...

DANIEL

Oh yeah, sorry!!! Well, how long does Bronchitis last?

LORRIN

Bronchitis usually lasts from 3 to 14 days or so, but sometimes up to a month.

DANIEL

Oh, I so hope you're only a three-dayer!

LORRIN

Me, too, but in the meantime, your doctor may give you a blood test, a chest x-ray, or a breathing test. Sometimes, they'll want to do a sputum culture – that's where they have you cough up mucus so they can test it.

DANIEL

Okay, so then if the test comes back and says that we've got bronchitis, then how do we get rid of it?

LORRIN

There are over the counter medicines...

DANIEL

You mean the stuff you buy at the store?

What is Bronchitis?

LORRIN

Exactly!...that help with the symptoms, like a fever and sore throat. Sometimes, if the Bronchitis is caused by bacteria, your doctor may give you some antibiotics. You need to take them until they're gone, even if you feel better.

DANIEL

Isn't there a machine thingy too?

LORRIN

In some cases, your doctor may give you a medicine to breathe in, either through a machine called a nebulizer or maybe through an inhaler, what some people call a "puffer." This can help open up the passages in your lungs.

DANIEL

Is that it? Seems pretty easy.

LORRIN

He's right...for once. And there are some things YOU can do to help you get better, like drinking lots of liquids.

DANIEL

Soup!! Yum!

LORRIN

Don't make yourself too tired. Get plenty of rest and sleep. Keeping your head up some when you sleep with an extra pillow or two might help you not cough so much. Plus, running a vaporizer or humidifier in your room can also help.

DANIEL

Be good to your body and it will be good to you.