

# Chronic Bronchitis

With every breath you take, your lungs pull air and oxygen into your body. When you breathe out, the lungs push carbon dioxide out of your body.

Oxygen-rich air travels through the bronchial tubes and then into even smaller tubes called bronchioles. At the end of each bronchiole are tiny air sacs called alveoli. Each alveoli is wrapped in tiny blood vessels.

Chronic bronchitis causes the bronchial tubes in your lungs to become swollen and irritated. Lining the bronchial tubes are little hairs called cilia coated with a layer of mucus to catch and hold tiny particles.

Your lungs act as filters protecting your body from harmful dust and germs you breathe in.

When you cough, sneeze, or clear your throat you move this material out of your body. When the bronchial tubes are inflamed, the lungs react by creating a thick mucus.

This makes it hard for air to move through the bronchial tubes and the bronchioles.

When you have chronic bronchitis, you cough a lot. You may be short of breath.

Other symptoms of chronic bronchitis include wheezing and feeling tired. It can last for months out of a year, for many years.

Chronic bronchitis is a type of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

When you have chronic bronchitis, you are more likely to get infections in your lungs and airways. Infections can increase mucus or cause the color of the mucus to change.

The main cause of chronic bronchitis is smoking.

Air pollution, breathing chemical fumes, factory dust, soot, or secondhand smoke over a long period of time can also cause chronic bronchitis.

If you are living with chronic bronchitis talk to your doctor about a treatment plan to help you breathe easier and feel better.