

# BRONCHIECTASIS

## What is Bronchiectasis?

Bronchiectasis is a chronic lung condition characterized by abnormal widening of one or more of the airways. Bronchiectasis damages the cilia (tiny hairs) that line the inside of the airways, which help to clear mucus out of the lungs. This mucus builds up and becomes stuck in pockets along the airways, causing the airways to become infected.

## What Causes Bronchiectasis?

1. Infections that damage the airways (pneumonia, tuberculosis)
2. Inhaled foreign object blocking off airway (peanut)
3. Cystic fibrosis (50% of all cases in U.S.)
4. Immunodeficiency disorders (HIV, AIDS)
5. Disorder of the cilia

## What are the Symptoms?

1. Chronic cough
2. Large amounts of discolored, foul smelling sputum or even blood
3. Wheezing
4. Shortness of breath
5. Chronic lung infections
6. Weight loss
7. Fatigue/weakness
8. Chronic sinusitis

## How is it Diagnosed?

1. CT scan of chest
2. Chest x-ray
3. Pulmonary function testing

## How is it Treated?

1. Use bronchodilators (to open passages)
2. Expectorants (help move sputum)
3. Mucous thinners
4. Chest physical therapy (flutter valve, vest, percussion)
5. Avoid smoke and irritants
6. Therapeutic bronchoscopy
7. Stay current on all vaccines
8. Oral/inhaled corticosteroids
9. Drink a lot of fluid
10. Lung resection/transplant
11. Follow up with physician regularly

