# Acute Bronchitis: Brief Version

## What is acute bronchitis?

When you have acute bronchitis, the air passages between your windpipe and your lungs are swollen and irritated. You have a bad cough and pain in your chest when you breathe deeply or cough.

## What is the cause?

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

Most of the time, it clears up in a few days. 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 where you live or work.

## What are the symptoms?

You may:
- Have a deep cough with yellowish or greenish phlegm.
- 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?

Resting at home and drinking plenty of fluids to keep the mucus loose may be all you need to do to get better in a few days. If your symptoms are severe or you have other health problems (such as heart or lung disease or diabetes), you may need to take antibiotics.

You should also:
- Stop smoking if you smoke.
- Avoid smoky places.

You may want to ask your healthcare provider about taking medicine for your cough or fever.
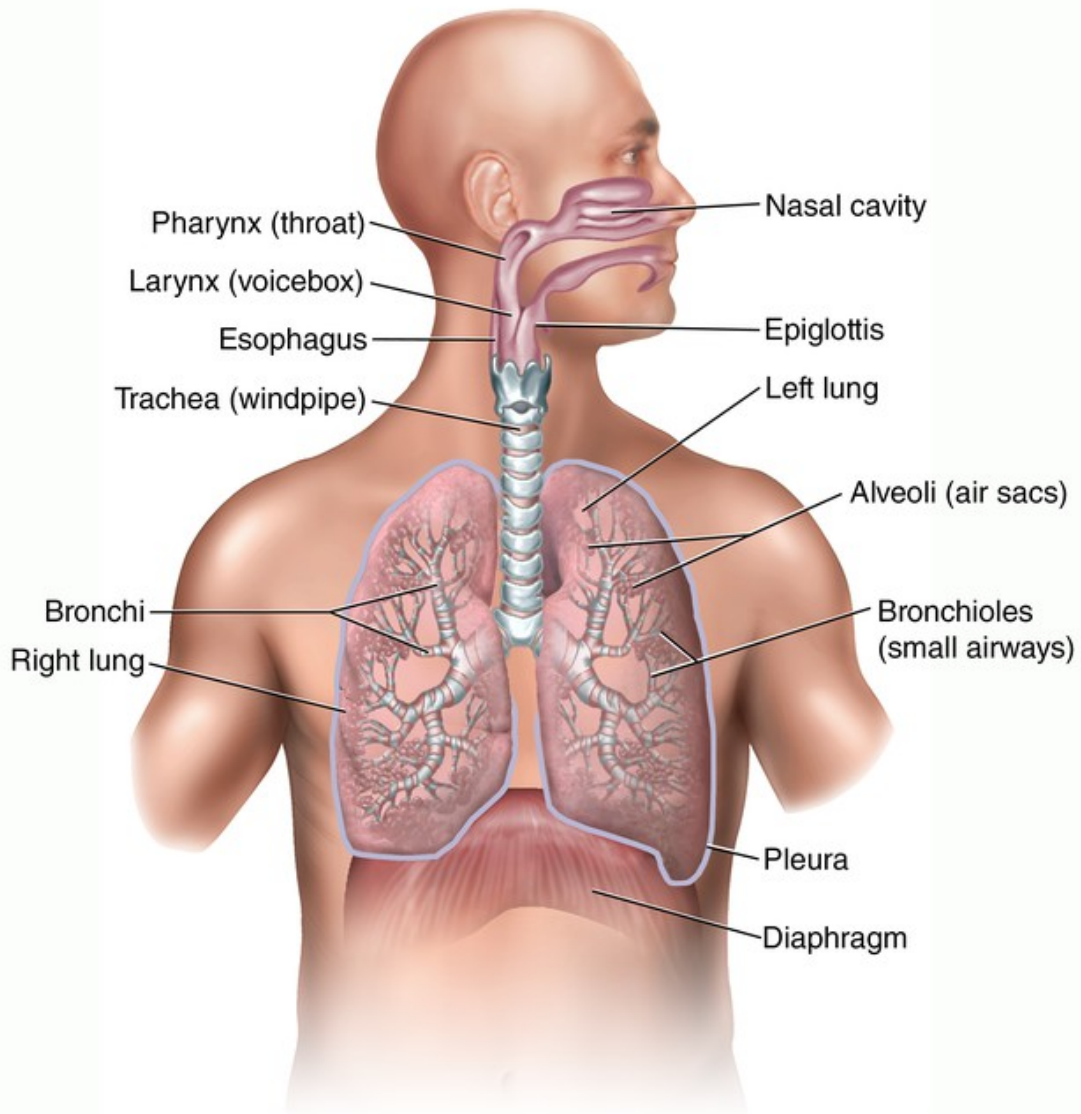
## How can I help prevent acute bronchitis?

You can lower your chances of getting bronchitis if you don't smoke.

Developed by RelayHealth.

*This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.*

# Respiratory System

Pharynx (throat)

Larynx (voicebox)

Esophagus

Trachea (windpipe)

Bronchi

Right lung

Nasal cavity

Epiglottis

Left lung

Alveoli (air sacs)

Bronchioles
(small airways)

Pleura

Diaphragm