

When to seek help

Routine
GP

- When? If you feel your bronchiectasis is worse but no change in the amount or stickiness or colour of your sputum and no improvement within 48 hours, make an appointment to see your GP
- Action. Take sputum sample to your GP do not start antibiotics until you have seen your GP

Urgent
GP

- When? All chest infections where you feel unwell with coughing up more sputum and worsening colour to your sputum or worsening breathlessness OR
- If coughing up blood OR
- If chest pain breathing in
- Action. Collect sputum sample and then start the antibiotics recommended immediately without waiting for the sputum result

Emergency GP
or 999

- When? You are confused or drowsy OR
- Coughing up large amounts of blood OR
- Severely breathlessness or breathless whilst talking
- Action. Call the emergency GP first
- Collect sputum sample if feasible and then start the antibiotics recommended immediately without waiting for the sputum result

Contact Numbers

GP _____

Community respiratory

nurse _____

Hospital respiratory nurse

Consultant _____

This leaflet is based on the British Thoracic Society Bronchiectasis self management plan 2012

British Thoracic Society
www.brit-thoracic.org.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille, please e-mail the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

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Bronchiectasis self management guide

Patient details (sticker)

Respiratory Medicine

www.ulh.nhs.uk

Baseline when well

My usual symptoms day to day when stable - (not during a chest infection): please tick or answer

Cough

- ☐ I normally cough most days of the week
- ☐ I normally cough one or two days of the week
- ☐ I normally cough a few days per month
- ☐ I normally cough only with chest infections

Sputum

- ☐ I normally cough up sputum most days of the week
- ☐ I normally cough up sputum one or two days of the week
- ☐ I normally cough up sputum a few days per month
- ☐ I normally cough up sputum only with chest infections

What colour is it?

- ☐ clear ☐ white ☐ light yellow or green ☐ dark yellow or green

How much do you cough day to day?

- ☐ 1 teaspoon ☐ 1 tablespoonful ☐ half a sputum pot
- ☐ 1 sputum pot

Is your sputum

- ☐ watery ☐ sticky

Breathlessness

- ☐ I normally get breathless walking around the home
- ☐ I normally get breathless walking outside on the level
- ☐ I normally get breathless walking up a flight of stairs
- ☐ I normally get breathless playing sports
- ☐ I only get breathless with chest infections
- ☐ I never get breathless

Other usual symptoms e.g. wheezing, tiredness, fatigue

Daily activity

- Clear your chest as advised by your physiotherapist.
- Take your medication and inhalers, if on them, as prescribed.
- Never allow medicines to run out.
- Keep a rescue antibiotic course at home.
- Drink plenty of fluids, eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise.
- Don't smoke. Ask for help from your practice nurse if needed.
- Get your annual flu vaccination.
- Avoid visiting anyone who is unwell with a cold, flu or chest infection.
- Keep a supply of sputum pots in the house.
- Know how much sputum you have and its colour.

Recommended chest treatment day to day

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Action

Chest infections

Signs (you may have some or all of these)

- Feeling generally unwell.
- Coughing up more sputum or sputum is more sticky
- Worsening colour to your sputum (clear to light or dark yellow or green. Or light to dark yellow or green).
- Worsening breathlessness.

Action

- Clear your chest more often (at least 2-3 times daily).
- Take your medication and inhalers.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Collect sputum sample and hand to your GP as soon as possible (if you cannot get to surgery that day, keep the sample in fridge overnight).
- If sputum is discoloured and/or you are coughing up more than usual and you feel unwell, start antibiotics after you have collected a sputum sample.
- Some colds get better without needing antibiotics. If there is no change in the amount or colour of your sputum **do not start** your antibiotics.
- Seek help if needed.

Recommendation treatment for chest infection:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8