



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

A lung disease in which the bronchial tubes become chronically blocked and accumulate thick secretions. Frequent secondary infections occur. It is not contagious unless associated with tuberculosis.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Frequent coughing with bad-smelling, green or yellow sputum (sometimes flecked with blood).
- Repeated lung infections.
- Shortness of breath; bad breath.
- General ill feeling.
- Frequent fatigue.
- Anemia (frequently).

### CAUSES

Damage to the small bronchial tubes, which may develop over years.

Common sources of damage include:

- Cigarette smoking.
- Repeated lung infections (pneumonia).
- Chronic bronchitis.
- Allergies; smoke or dust.
- Inhalation of a foreign object.
- Tuberculosis; lung cancer or lung abscess.
- Fungus infection.
- Cystic fibrosis.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Smoking.
- Poor nutrition.
- Obesity.
- Family history of tuberculosis.
- Fatigue or overwork.
- Exposure to allergens.
- Cold, humid weather.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Don't ever smoke.
- Obtain medical treatment for lung infections.
- Avoid as many risks as possible.
- Get immunization against influenza and pneumonia.

### EXPECTED OUTCOMES

With treatment, most patients with bronchiectasis can lead nearly normal lives without major disability.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).
- Repeated pneumonia.
- Destruction of lung tissue.



## TREATMENT

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Medical tests for diagnosis may include X-rays of the lung, including a bronchogram, sputum culture, bronchoscopy.
- Don't smoke.
- Learn and practice postural drainage twice a day.
- Sleep with 3- to 5-inch blocks under the foot of the bed to prevent mucus from collecting in the lower lobes of the lungs.
- If you work around heavy air pollution, do everything possible to limit your exposure, including changing jobs.
- Install air conditioning with a filter and humidity control in your home.
- Avoid shouting, loud laughing, crying, exertion or sudden temperature changes, if these trigger coughing episodes.
- Keep the teeth and mouth in excellent condition.
- If you have an allergic background, avoid allergens.
- Surgery to remove isolated areas of damaged lung tissue (rare).
- Additional information available from the American Lung Association, 1740 Broadway, New York, NY 10019, (800) 586-4872.

### MEDICATIONS

- Antibiotics for 10 days every month if bacterial infections have caused bronchiectasis or triggered episodes of pneumonia or acute bronchitis.
- Bronchodilators to enlarge airways.
- Expectorants to loosen secretions.

### ACTIVITY

Remain as active as possible.

### DIET

Increase fluid intake. Drink a minimum of 8 glasses of fluid a day. This thins lung secretions so they can be coughed out more easily.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of bronchiectasis.
- After diagnosis, you have symptoms of a respiratory infection or bronchitis.
- Fever.
- Blood appears in the sputum, sputum thickens despite treatment or postural drainage reveals a change in color, amount or character of sputum.
- Chest pain increases.
- Shortness of breath occurs without coughing or when at rest.