



# Chronic Bronchitis

How To Heal, Recover, And Beat Bronchitis

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# Introduction

Bronchitis is something you are likely to have in your lifetime at least once. Since it usually follows a cold or other respiratory condition, most people will develop it in the course of their lifetime.

Your chest is throbbing in pain. You are coughing and it hurts to do so. These are the first symptoms of bronchitis. Although it is a common condition that many face, for some it is even worse. That's because for some people bronchitis is disabling and more frequent. If you fall in this category, then you are looking for a way to gain back your strength and to get your life back on track.

The good news is that you can do just that. Bronchitis doesn't have to be a condition that you can't shake. What it can be is a time for you to prove your self worth by pushing yourself to improve.

In this e-book, we'll discuss what bronchitis is, what it can do to your health and how to keep it out of your life as much as possible. By learning this now you can protect yourself in the long term from what bronchitis can do to you.

# Chapter 1: Bronchitis, Cough, Cough

Before you can actually deal with bronchitis, you need to know what it is and how it affects your body. Having an education in this information puts you at the forefront of spotting symptoms and taking action before you become ill further or even lessening the effect that bronchitis can have on your daily life.

Bronchitis happens in your lungs. In fact, it is a condition that affects the inner walls in your air passage ways of your lungs. There, bronchitis causes the lining to become infected and inflamed, causing you the symptoms of fevers, chills, coughing and a pain in your chest.

These are the symptoms of acute bronchitis, something that many people will get after they have had a respiratory infection. If that is what you have, then you may have symptoms that last a few days and perhaps a cough that lasts sometimes as long as three weeks. In general, though, this type of bronchitis does not last long as is not something that is severe.

On the other hand, bronchitis that comes back time and time again is something to be concerned about. Bronchitis can lead to more serious conditions such as emphysema, asthma or even chronic bronchitis. These need medical attention as soon as possible.

If you are someone that smokes, your chances of getting chronic bronchitis are often much more severe than those that are likely to get acute bronchitis. Later in this book, we will talk about chronic bronchitis and what it does to your body as well as your health. It's important to realize the difference between these conditions though.

### ***Symptoms To Look For***

The symptoms of bronchitis really are a tell tale sign of having the condition. If you have any of these symptoms, you should seek the help of your family doctor as soon as possible.

The main sign of this condition is that of a yellow/gray or even green colored mucus that comes up when you are coughing. This mucus is called sputum. The mucus should be a sign to you that something is wrong, especially with this type of coloring.

Your body produces and needs mucus because it helps to keep your body hydrated. But, when you notice it, then there is a problem.

That's because the mucus has built up which is a sign of an infection. Normally, this mucus just slides down your throat when you swallow your saliva. When there is too much of it, though, it becomes necessary for your body to remove it in another way, in this case, coughing it up.

With bronchitis, your airways have become inflamed and when that happens they produce a large amount of discolored mucus. The coloring of the mucus should signal to you that you have an infection someplace in your air passage ways.

Although this mucus is a sign that you are suffering from bronchitis it doesn't always have to be there. Sometimes it is swallowed (especially by children who are suffering from bronchitis) and therefore it is not noticed as often.

In addition, some people don't have a large accumulation of the product in their throats and therefore do not cough it up. For this reason, you should realize that you can have bronchitis without having any mucus.

There are additional signs that you should pay attention to in order to tell if you have bronchitis. Remember, if you

suffer from them contact your doctor to talk to him about your condition as soon as possible.

Additional symptoms of bronchitis can include any or all of these symptoms and signs as well:

- A pain in your chest that makes you feel constricted
- A burning sensation in your chest, soreness there
- Congestion
- A sore throat
- The feeling of not being able to catch your breath
- Wheezing, coughing
- Fever, which should not be too elevated. If so, contact your doctor as soon as possible.
- Chills

When you experience any of these, especially a combination of them with mucus, you could be suffering from a bronchitis infection.

### **Is It Chronic Sinusitis?**

Sometimes people mistakenly believe that they are suffering from bronchitis when in fact it is chronic sinusitis that they are suffering from. During this type of infection, the lining of one or more of your cavities, which are in the bones that are around your nose, are infected.

The confusion of this condition with that of bronchitis is easy to make that is because chronic sinusitis has the same type of mucus discharge. Here, it is usually a yellow or green postnasal discharge that is significantly thick.

In addition, there is a cough that happens when you try to drain the mucus from your throat. That mucus is actually coming from your sinuses which are draining into your throat.

Although the two conditions sound like they have the same symptoms, its important to notice where the mucus is coming from as well as your secondary symptoms, which most do not find in chronic sinusitis. Consult your doctor to insure you are treating the right condition.

### **Is It Chronic Bronchitis?**

As we mentioned, acute and chronic bronchitis are two different things. Throughout this book, we'll show you the differences between each. As for symptoms, there is a difference between chronic bronchitis and acute bronchitis and you should know about them.

Some of the symptoms that are signs of chronic bronchitis include these symptoms:

- a cough that doesn't go away and is accompanied with sputum
- A cough that won't go away during the winter months but does go away during the summer
- You may feel breathless with or without exerting yourself.
- Mild chest pain is also common
- Other symptoms that are similar to that of bronchitis in its acute form include a mild fever, excessive mucus, and coughing.
- Clubbed fingers can also be a sign of chronic bronchitis
- You may experience episodes of acute bronchitis

By working with your doctor, you can determine if what you have is that of chronic bronchitis or another condition. If in fact it is determined that you have a chronic condition, which means that your condition will continue to happen, over and over, it is essential that you find the help that you need in getting the relief that's necessary.

Without the proper help for your condition, you'll face conditions that can worsen as well as interfere with your health in the long term. Yet, for those that suffer from chronic conditions such as that of chronic bronchitis, there is help available that can lessen the frequency of what you face as well as improve the severity of it.

## **Chapter 2: The Causes Of Bronchitis**

Bronchitis is a condition in which you can have an illness that is both infectious and one that is noninfectious. In most cases, it is a virus that causes bronchitis to happen. This virus is generally the same type that causes a common cold to happen in most people.

On the other hand, bronchitis can also be a condition that is caused by the pollutants in the air that you breathe including from cigarette smoke. Smog and chemicals that are used to clean with are additional causes for bronchitis.

Another cause of bronchitis happens because of the acids that are normally found in your stomach backing up, literally, up into your gastroesophageal track. This is sometimes called GERD, or gastroesophageal reflux disease.

Some people that work in conditions that are not favorable for good, clean breathing also develop bronchitis. This type of bronchitis is known as an occupational bronchitis in which case the pollutants including dusts and/or fumes get into the breathing airways and cause illness.

Usually, when the person stops working there, or improves the breathing circumstances, their bronchitis symptoms also improve and often the irritation will stop.

### **Causes Of Chronic Bronchitis**

The causes of chronic bronchitis are often a bit more drastic. If you have this condition, the walls of your bronchial tubes have become thickened and they are inflamed to such a degree that it is considered nearly permanent. When this happens, chronic bronchitis is evident.

Most with this condition must cough at least some time during each day to clear their throat. This is especially true of those that have chronic bronchitis due to their smoking habits. If you have to cough at least one time every day for at least three months of the year, you are considered to have chronic bronchitis.

Chronic bronchitis is often caused by smoking, but its not the only time that you can get it. You can also get chronic bronchitis from air pollution that is severe or toxic gasses that are in the area in which you work.

Those that suffer from chronic symptoms of bronchitis often develop asthma because of it. This is caused by the long term inflammation of your air passageways. In any case, it

is essential that you get help from your doctor in dealing with your condition.

Those that are suffering from chronic bronchitis have a very serious illness to consider. As you'll see in later chapters, it is this condition that often needs the most attention by you and your doctors.

### ***Are You At Risk, Then?***

Since anyone can get acute bronchitis from a cold that they have, it is not difficult to imagine that virtually everyone is at risk for developing this condition. Yet, there are some additional reasons why this condition can effect you more often or even just more severely than it will effect other people.

For example, those that are living in a home where they or someone else smokes are at an increased risk for bronchitis. In addition, children in these types of living arrangements are even more susceptible to bronchitis.

Those that are living in conditions where bronchitis is likely, such as a smoking home, will also have increased risks of developing pneumonia, colds, respiratory infections, asthma and ear infections.

Even still, there are additional conditions in which you can find yourself suffering from bronchitis. Those include the following risk factors:

- For some people, the risk may come from a low resistance level that is due to another health condition that they are facing. For example, those that are suffering from a cold have a weakened immune system, making them more likely to suffer from it. In addition, those that are elderly and children are more likely to face bronchitis than those that are middle age because they have a weaker immune system.
- GERD is another reason that you may experience bronchitis. You are more at risk if you suffer from gastroesophageal reflux disease. The cough that this back up of acids causes in your gastroesophageal track can be a cause of your cough and your bronchitis. Therefore, those that suffer from this condition are more likely to have these symptoms.
- The other large risk factor to getting bronchitis has to do with that of chronic bronchitis. Those that are exposed to irritants while working or doing other things on a regular basis are more likely to experience bronchitis than those that are not. Occupational bronchitis is a large part of this. Lung irritants include a wide range of things including cotton dust, hemp,

flax, chemicals like ammonia, hydrogen sulfide, strong acids, bromine and sulfur dioxide. This condition is one in which the cough that you have is dry, or without as much or any mucus discharge.

If you have any of these risk factors, it pays to do what you can to avoid getting bronchitis. If you are exposed and already have bronchitis, it's important to look for ways to relieve your suffering.

In some cases, such as those that revolve around occupational bronchitis, just removing the irritants from your lifestyle will ultimately improve your quality of life and reduce the occurrences and health risks associated with bronchitis. In other cases, the damage that is done is permanent. The best way to stop this damage is to seek the help you need as soon as possible.

### ***Do You Need A Doctor?***

Do you need a doctor for your bronchitis? This question is one that you'll have to answer yourself, depending on the type and severity of the condition you are in. For most people, the need for a doctor is not there, because they are suffering from acute bronchitis, which will likely go away on its own within just a few days to a week.

In order to help this to happen, get as much rest as you can and get lots of fluids. Keep your home's air moist as well. Treat bronchitis in the same basic way you would treat a cold to see improvement.

If your condition is serious in that you can't sleep, then contact your doctor. There are medications that can be given to you to lessen the pain and to help you to improve your overall health faster. He or she will probably provide you with a prescription strength cough suppressant.

Those that have a fever, which is to be expected in most cases, should contact their doctor if their temperature reaches higher than 101 degrees F. If you are coughing up blood, yellow mucus, green mucus or you can't catch your breath, call on a doctor as soon as possible because your condition may have progressed.

When bronchitis progresses, it ends up being that of pneumonia, a very serious condition that can be fatal if not treated properly.

In addition to this, you should seek the help of your doctor if you find that your bronchitis has not gone away within six weeks. Those that face chronic bronchitis can develop additional conditions like asthma when their air passageways remain inflamed.

Certain people should seek the help of their doctor sooner. If you have chronic health problems such as chronic lung problems, congestive heart failure, emphysema, or asthma, then you need to see your doctor as soon as you feel an episode of bronchitis coming on. Those that suffer from these conditions are at an increased risk for additional health complications from the bronchitis and therefore should seek attention as soon as possible.

If you have had bronchitis within the last few weeks or months and feel it coming on again, seek the help of your doctor. This can be a sign of the development of chronic bronchitis. This is especially true if you work in an area that has irritants that can bring it on or live in a home where there is a smoker.

If you feel that your condition is severe, seeking your doctor's advice is just good medicine. A call to your family doctor will take just minutes and will provide for you the help you need in getting treatment started.

Those that have had symptoms like these that have happened more than one or two times in any given year should seek out help to insure that they are not suffering from a chronic condition.

## **Chapter 3: Seeking A Doctor's Help For Bronchitis**

Depending on the type of bronchitis that you have and its severity determines if you should seek help from a doctor for it. We've talked about when you need to seek a doctor's help in the last chapter. But, what happens when you go to visit your doctor?

### ***How Diagnosis Happens***

To determine if you have bronchitis, your doctor will likely listen to your chest. This helps him to determine what is happening inside by listening for mucus build ups. In addition, he or she may also do a chest x-ray which will show the inflamed and enlarged air passageways that are likely the problem.

Some doctors will also want a sample of the mucus to determine what type and how much bacteria are in your system. The sample will consider the amount of bacteria found in the sputum when you cough.

Those that are suffering from chronic bronchitis are likely to have additional testing to insure that that is what you are suffering from.

The doctor will do a series of tests that will take into account your symptoms for conditions such as asthma and emphysema. To do this, a pulmonary function test which is also called a PFT will be used. During this test, you are told to blow into a device which is called a spirometer. This determines how much volume of air your lungs have after you take a deep breath and have blown it out.

The test is simple and takes just a minute to perform. It causes you no pain at all. In fact, if you have had bronchitis several times in the past year, ask your doctor to perform a pulmonary function test to help to determine if there is a possibility of facing chronic bronchitis.

Generally, from these tests, your doctor will be able to rule bronchitis or not. If you are diagnosed with it, the next step will be to treat it, and if treatment is even needed in your case.

Doctors will determine the level of severity as well as the likeliness of treatment that you need.

## ***Treatment Options From Your Doctor***

Once your doctor has determined your condition is that of bronchitis, he or she will begin treatment for you. If you have acute bronchitis, though, treatment may be limited. In fact, it may be very difficult to treat your bronchitis because it is a virus.

Virus strains don't usually react to antibiotics. Bronchitis is often caused from a virus so your doctor can't treat it with antibiotics. The most basic and most common treatment that is used then is that of this combination.

- Getting extra rest is important to allow your immune system the help and strength that it needs.
- Take in plenty of fluids by increasing your consumption considerably to aid in restoring fluid that is being lost through mucus discharge.
- In addition, prescription and nonprescription medications can be used to stop the cough that accompanies bronchitis.

The third recommendation for taking medications to suppress a cough is not one that is always recommended.

That's because it is important to your lungs to remove that mucus from your system. Without a cough, your system can't get the mucus out of your lungs and air passageways effectively.

Sometimes these medications are offered for night time use so that you can actually get some rest. Yet, they shouldn't be taken around the clock unless your doctor recommends doing so.

If your doctor does tell you to take them, it's important to take the right type. Most of the time an over the counter cough medication, is all that you will need. Look and read the labels to determine which the right one for you is. Don't take a medication that will keep you awake because rest is a very key element to improving your condition.

Antibiotics can be prescribed for you if your doctor determines that you have a bacterial infection which is causing your conditions. Those that suffer from chronic bronchitis are more likely to receive this type of treatment for their bronchitis.

Those that have problems with a chronic lung disorder often need this additional help. Those that live in a home where there is smoking also may need an antibiotic to help reduce the seriousness and likelihood of developing an infection. The development of a secondary infection can cause

additional problems for those facing chronic health conditions.

If your doctor determines that you have asthma, or that your chronic condition is likely to develop asthma, then he or she may recommend additional treatment for your condition. Those that are diagnosed with asthma will need an inhaler and sometimes additional asthma medications.

These products have the goal of reducing the amount of inflammation in your air passageways as well as open them up to allow for better passage to your lungs. This type of medication can be vitally important to those suffering from asthma.

From looking at your test results and listening to your lungs, your doctor will determine the right type of treatment for your condition. Usually in cases of acute conditions, this treatment is simply rest and fluids.

Yet, in the cases of chronic conditions, it is all the more important to provide you with the help you need through additional medication. Without this medication, your condition can worsen into a life threatening condition such as pneumonia.

## **Chapter 4: What Can Happen If You Don't Get Treatment**

Although for most people bronchitis does not lead to anything more than a few days in bed and perhaps a bit of weight loss, for some it can lead to problems and complications that can span a lifetime.

Acute bronchitis is the least likely to do this. This is the type of bronchitis that follows a cold or other respiratory condition and usually requires very little to no prescription medication or even a doctor's visit. Yet, this is not the only type that should be considered.

In some people who are more prone to difficulties from illnesses, one single case of bronchitis, even acute bronchitis can lead to complications. For example, in some older people, this type of bronchitis can lead to pneumonia.

Those that have additional health concerns such as those that are smokers can also get to this point. In addition, infants and the elderly have naturally weaker immune systems and they too are more likely to experience problems with complications.

In these cases, individuals will need to seek medical attention so that the bronchitis can be monitored as well as treated with any type of medication that can be used. In those that have severe cases, hospitalization may be required to help.

### ***When It Happens Often***

For some individuals, bronchitis happens often. This is what is called chronic bronchitis. In these individuals, the bronchitis may not go away, but may lessen in its severity. When this happens, individuals need to be aware of it and seek the help that's needed as soon as possible.

Chronic bronchitis is a serious health condition that can lead to or even tell you that there is something else wrong with the body.

For example, chronic bronchitis can be an indication that you are suffering from asthma or lung disorders. In fact, those that do suffer from chronic bronchitis are more likely to end up with lung cancer than those that do not. Lung cancer is one of the leader's in death among people that smoke for long periods of time.

Remember that you don't have to smoke yourself to be a victim of what smoke can do. Just being exposed to it over long periods of time puts you at risk.

Chronic bronchitis is also a condition which affects your quality of life. You can't do the things that you like to do without suffering from breathlessness. You cough all of the time and your chest hurts. You are sick to more extreme levels when a cold just brushes by others.

These things can cause you to feel sick all of the time. That lessens your quality of life and makes you emotionally drained at the same time. Although this is only an additional part of the condition to deal with, it still bothers people enough to make a difference.

You can side track many of these complications by seeking help from your doctor when you become ill, especially when you've been suffering from this condition more often than ever before. Chronic bronchitis may not seem like a big deal, and it definitely doesn't seem like something to worry about when it feels like a cold, but when it happens over and over again, it very much so is something to worry about.

Most of these complications can be avoided with a doctor's help.

## Chapter 5: Chronic Bronchitis And Emphysema

If you are suffering from chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema, acute bronchitis seems like nothing more than a cold. This condition is one in which severity is a serious issue for your well being.

Chronic bronchitis is a lung disease. It, along with emphysema, is known as COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This condition is one that refers to the obstruction of the air passageways that stops you from breathing normally. You can have both emphysema and chronic bronchitis at the same time.

Here are some facts you should know about chronic bronchitis.

1. COPD claims some 122,000 deaths each year in the US, as claimed by a study done in 2003. It is one of the leading causes of death.
2. The largest risk factor in patients that get COPD is that of smoking. 80 to 90 percent of those that suffer from this condition will be smokers. 90 percent of them will die from it because they smoked.

3. Female smokers are more likely to get COPD than men are.
4. If you are a victim of air pollution, second hand smoke, or have a history of infections of the respiratory system, you have an increased risk of getting COPD.
5. 19 percent of those that suffer from COPD will get it from their work environment.

It is estimated that some 11 million people in the United States alone have chronic bronchitis or emphysema yet many more are believed to suffer from it but are under diagnosed by it. In the population of aged Americans, of a frightening 700,000 hospital discharges, 70 percent of them were in people that are over the age of 65 (in 2004) showing the real risk that this condition poses to those that are older.

### ***What Happens In Chronic Bronchitis?***

Those that suffer from chronic bronchitis start by having an inflammation of their bronchial tubes. These are your air passageways, remember and therefore are very important to be clear so that air can move easily in and out of them allowing you to breathe.

During your initial bouts of chronic bronchitis, your symptoms are the same as those that a person with acute bronchitis will face. There is a heavy discharge of mucus from your coughing and the cough itself is a tell tale sign of chronic bronchitis.

One thing that your doctor's will determine is if there is something else wrong that could possibly be causing your bronchitis in the first place. Some will have additional conditions like asthma that can lead to this problem. But, when there are no underlying causes, bronchitis can be labeled as the cause of your illness and then treated as such.

When you have a bronchitis bout, your bronchial tubes become inflamed and swollen. Each time that this happens, the lining of those tubes becomes scarred. Over time, the more irritation that happens the more excessive mucus production will become. Your tubes lining will become thickened because of the scarring.

As this happens, your cough becomes more and more troublesome. The excessive mucus and the scarring lead to problems with air flow. You can't breathe as easily as you did. Still, the progression worsens so that your lungs become scarred themselves.

At this point, there is also the addition of bacteria in your lungs and tubes. The location becomes perfect for the breeding of bacteria which eventually cuts off all flow of air to your lungs, causing death.

As horrible as that sounds, many people will die each year from the effects of chronic bronchitis.

### ***It Doesn't Happen Fast***

A key point that you need to take from this e-book is the fact that chronic bronchitis does not happen overnight. It doesn't come on one day out of no way and cause you to die. It is a condition that happens and worsens over time. It is also a condition that can be treated, slowed and in some cases reversed, meaning you can get through it!

As you will see in the next chapter, you can get to the point of preventing and improving your life circumstances even if you have bronchitis.

Many patients do not get to the doctor until their bronchitis is in a severe state. When this happens, their condition is worsened. But, why don't people just get to the doctor? The answer to that lies in the fact that many mistakenly believe that bronchitis is not a dangerous, life threatening condition that it is.

In fact, most of those that do get to the doctor get there when their condition is severe and advanced. Usually their lungs have already been scarred and are seriously injured.

When you reach this stage of chronic bronchitis, your condition can lead to additional problems such as respiratory problems (problems breathing easily) or even heart failure, which in itself is life threatening.

Yet, many cases can be lessened in severity if the proper doctor's advice were to be gotten and taken to prevent it from worsening.

### ***What's Emphysema's Story?***

COPD is shared by both chronic bronchitis and emphysema because many patients that have one will also have the other. In this condition, the problem lies in the alveoli which are inside of the lungs. This is the location where your body takes oxygen from the air you breathe and exchanges it with carbon dioxide that is already in the blood.

The alveoli, which are also called air sacs, have very thin, soft and very fragile walls. When these walls are damaged, they can't be fixed and there's no way to replace or reverse the damage to them. Usually, small holes develop in their tissues especially in the lower lung area.

Since your body needs these air sacs to provide oxygen to the body and to remove the carbon dioxide from your blood, it is vitally important to keep them in good condition. Yet, slowly, as each one is damaged by holes, they become useless and stop functioning.

As more and more are destroyed in this manner, your body is less likely to get all of the oxygen that it needs into its bloodstream. This is characterized on the outside by you not getting enough air, which leaves you breathless.

When you can't catch your breath, this is why. And, it only worsens from here. In the next step of the problem, your lungs lose their elasticity, or their ability to stretch and come back into shape.

When this occurs, the body can't keep your airways open enough for you to bring air into the body for use. When this happens, you have a lot of problem trying to exhale or get the air you take it out of your body again.

As you can see, this condition is just as drastically frightening and worrisome as that of chronic bronchitis. When the two are paired together, this is an even worse condition for you to be in.

## ***Emphysema Doesn't Happen Fast, Either***

Just like chronic bronchitis, emphysema doesn't come on quickly, either. This is a condition that develops and worsens over time. Usually, it happens very slowly, too, giving you the time that you need to improve your condition by seeking medical attention, although most will not do so until it is much too late to get that help.

Usually, emphysema is brought on by the exposure to cigarette smoke. IT can take years to develop into this level of severity and usually during that time, you are being exposed to cigarette smoke either as the smoker or even as a second hand smoker.

Most of those diagnosed, some 90 percent, are over the age of 45. Most of them are males, up to 55 percent, but both sexes are faced with the risk of emphysema is they are smokers or live in an area where smoking is commonly breathed in.

If you have emphysema, you will have the cough that we've talked about as well as shortness of breath, and the inability to exercise. Your doctor will consider your current condition, your pulmonary function test results as well as x-rays to determine your condition.

## **Chapter 6: Surviving COPD And Its Effects On Your Life**

As we've talked about, one of the key elements to surviving chronic bronchitis and emphysema is to get help as soon as you realize that you are ill. That means seeking your doctor's attention and asking for the right tests if you have experienced bronchitis more than two times per year or you are a smoker (or live in a smoking house.)

But, how is a condition like this actually treated?

There are several key things that need to be taken into consideration here.

### ***Quality Of Life***

One of the largest factors facing those that suffer from chronic bronchitis and emphysema is that of quality of life. As the disease moves from being an irritating cough to being in its advanced stages, it gets harder and harder to maintain the things that you enjoy doing.

At first, you can't catch your breath. As it moves through its seriousness, you may need to use an oxygen supplement

and many will eventually need a mechanical respiratory to provide them with assistance.

Most that suffer from this condition face limits in the physical exertion they can put out, their ability to do chores around the house, their ability to be social and to engage in family activities and they severely lack the ability to work as they used to.

### ***The Job OF Medications***

There is no cure for chronic bronchitis. There is no cure for emphysema. There is no way to reverse the damage that has been done to your lungs and bronchial tubes because of these conditions.

The medications that are used to treat chronic bronchitis is designed to aid in several things, though. First, it can slow the amount of deterioration that happens in the lungs so that the disease does not progress as fast as it would have without the medications.

In addition, medications are used to treat the symptoms of chronic bronchitis. This means providing relief to the vast number of symptoms you face including coughing and the inability to do many things.

Finally, medications are used to stop additional complications from happening to you.

### **Symptom Medication**

In order to provide you with some relief from not being able to breath easily, your doctor is likely to provide you with a medication called bronchodilator type medications. These are prescription medications that help to relax your bronchial tubes and allow your air passageways to open up allowing for better passage of air through them.

Medications like this are essential to keeping you symptom free or even just lessening the frequency and intensity of those symptoms. Most are taken as inhalers as sprays but there are additional medications that can be prescribed to be taken orally.

### **Antibiotics**

Another type of medication used to treat chronic bronchitis is that of antibiotics. As we mentioned earlier, acute bronchitis doesn't react to antibiotics because it is usually caused by a virus. But, chronic bronchitis is not necessarily unaffected by medications like this.

Antibiotics can be used if there is evidence that there is a secondary infection. In addition, antibiotics can be used to help prevent additional symptoms and conditions from happening.

### **Glucocorticosteroids**

Systemic glucocorticosteroids are another treatment option for those that are suffering from these conditions. This type of treatment is still one that is being experimented with, but has shown some progress in helping to provide relief from symptoms as well as to slow progression.

Usually, though, this type of treatment is only used on patients that have an acute case because these medications shouldn't be used over a long period of time with any frequency because of the side effects that they have.

### **Vaccines**

Those that suffer from chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema will need to have pneumonia and flu vaccines each year. This can be an excellent way to keep additional respiratory illnesses at bay, thereby not worsening the symptoms and conditions that you face.

## **Transplantation**

In some cases, transplantation of the damaged lungs can be an option. Lung transplantation has shown significant improvement over the last few years. Those that suffer from this condition often have some ability to qualify for this type of treatment. Those that have a lung volume reduction surgery have shown significant improvement in their condition.

Yet, it is not for everyone. Some patients that suffer from problems with the exchange of gasses in their lungs do not do well with lung transplantations and therefore it is not considered an option for everyone that suffers from emphysema or chronic bronchitis.

The good news is that there are other hopes available to those that are suffering from chronic bronchitis and emphysema. You can improve your health through improvements in your daily lifestyle. And, if you visit your doctor when you become ill, you cut the amount of progression of the condition severely, improving your overall longevity.

## **Chapter 7: Pulmonary Rehabilitation**

One of the treatment options that exist for chronic bronchitis is that of pulmonary rehabilitation. This treatment is one that provides restorative and preventative care to individuals that are suffering.

This process of treatment is one that is designed to fit each patient's needs and their situation. There is no definite treatment procedure, but one that works to allow you better care over a period of time.

As your lungs become less and less capable of providing the right amount of oxygen to your body, you need an increased amount of training on how to handle and improve your ability to manage with this progression.

During pulmonary rehabilitation, your doctor will work with you to determine your needs through assessment. Then, you will be working on a program that provides you with several key elements. Skill training, physical reconditioning, and psychological support are given to the patient in the necessary dose to provide you with the ability to cope with your condition.

Goals are established that will provide you and your team of doctors with the necessary establishment of improving your quality of life and your ability to improve your health. You are not alone in this process, though. Your family is encouraged to work right alongside you to insure that you are given the care that's needed and so that they can give you the support you need.

### ***What's Included In Therapy?***

The process of pulmonary rehabilitation includes the following treatments and educational tools to aid you in improving your well being.

- You are educated about your body's make up and the lung disease that you have. You will be educated on your stage of that disease as well.
- You will work with your doctors to understanding your medical tests; including understanding what your treatment is going to be based on those tests.
- You will learn hygiene techniques for your bronchial tubes which can aid in providing additional air flow through your air passageways.
- You will be given an exercise regimen and will learn a series of techniques. This includes learning how to

breathe all over again, endurance training, strength training and flexibility training are necessary.

- You will also learn how to conserve your energy and how this affects your daily life.
- Your medication is prescribed and you are educated on what the medication does, including over the counter medications, herbal remedies if they exist and any side effects that you can expect to face. Understanding how vital your medication is to your life is critical to getting benefit from it.
- You will learn how to assess your own condition, too. Since time is of the essence when you are ill, you need to learn to spot the need to seek medical attention and how to assess your daily needs.
- Environmental control is a must. Removing any pollutants from your home that could worsen your condition must happen. This also includes spotting instances where you are prone to infection including getting immunizations yearly.

In addition to these things, you'll be taught a wide range of additional tools to help you to improve your day to day living. You will learn how to manage sleep disturbances

including sleep apnea and insomnia, to common conditions in lung disease.

You will learn the effect that lung disease will have on sexual intimacy. It is vitally important that you learn to stop smoking, to improve your nutrition and to get the necessary exercise. You need to learn how to travel with your illness, how to improve your daily life and activities so that they will be able to be done even when you are suffering from chronic bronchitis.

You will learn how to manage stress and how to improve your body's reaction to it.

You are given psychosocial intervention as well as support to provide yourself with the support that is needed during this illness. Advance care planning is also discussed and planned for.

For most patients, it is also important to have and learn how to use oxygen. This includes different methods for oxygen supplementation as well as learning when you need it and how to use it.

These tools provide a comprehensive care package to aid you in improving your condition.

## ***What Can Pulmonary Rehabilitation Do?***

It does take a lot of work to put together a care package like this. It does take a lot of work to make changes to your daily life. But, is it worth it?

With the help of pulmonary rehabilitation, there is hope for your condition. Depending on what stage your chronic bronchitis is at will depend on your ability to gain back any function and quality of life.

Pulmonary rehabilitation has shown to be beneficial in improving your exercise tolerance, which ultimately improves your ability to do activities that you could not do without it. Just doing simple activities around the home can be easier.

In addition, by taking advantage of health care resources that you have, you can improve your quality of life. By taking the time to educate yourself you can truly understand what you need to do and why to improve your condition. Ultimately, improving your quality of life is what this rehabilitation program will do for you.

In some situations, pulmonary rehabilitation has been shown to help improve survival in patients with chronic bronchitis and lung disease.

While curing the condition is not likely, improving how long you survive and improving your living conditions through that time period can happen with this type of rehabilitation.

Additionally, improvement can be seen in:

- Improving respiratory symptoms such as coughing and mucus production.
- Improving your ability to perform physical activities effectively.
- Increasing knowledge which ultimately leads to improved conditions and early prevention.
- Reduces the dependence you have on medical care including the hospital stays that you have.
- Increases your ability to return to work
- Lowers the number of patients that need to depend on a ventilator to breathe

Remember that your condition is unique to you. That means that this help is only as effective as you make it.

If you have chronic bronchitis or emphysema, or other lung diseases such as asthma, pulmonary rehabilitation may be a treatment option for you. Although it is not something that can be beneficial to all patients, depending on their stage of illness, it does benefit many, helping many to return to a more normal lifestyle.

Talk to your doctor about pulmonary rehabilitation. Find out how effective it can be for your specific case. Your doctor will perform an assessment of your medical tests and your physical abilities to determine if it's the right treatment for you.

Since it can be tailored to meet your needs, most patients with lung disease of some type can find benefit in pulmonary rehabilitation. If your doctor does not recommend it, find out why. If he doesn't mention it, bring it up as a possible tool to aid you in improving your life and quality of life as well.

Communicating your needs with your doctor is a must, because he may or may not be able to provide you with this information without your questions. Even more so, you should be in control of your destiny with chronic bronchitis.

## **Chapter 8: The Lifestyle Changes That Are Necessary**

If you are suffering from chronic bronchitis, there are necessary lifestyle changes that will in fact save your life.

If you plan to continue to worsen, keep doing what you are doing now. If you want to improve your health, you have to make very important yet very difficult decisions. There's no easy way around it. Unfortunately, giving up some of your freedoms will improve your chances of surviving what chronic bronchitis will do to you.

Through a few changes in your lifestyle, you will increase your longevity. You will not add an more punishment to the condition that you are already facing. What's more is that you give your body the chance to improve some of the damage that's been done to you.

Throughout this chapter, we will go through each of these necessary lifestyle changes and show you how to make simple decisions to live. Although it may be difficult, with family support, you can improve your fighting chance against chronic bronchitis.

## ***Stop Smoking***

You knew we were going to say it, but smoking is the cause of your chronic bronchitis and therefore you simply must stop doing it. This is the hardest part of the process of improving your lifestyle in the hopes of prolonging your life.

If you continue to smoke, you continue to add damage to your lungs and your bronchial tubes, worsening your condition, pushing you farther and faster through the stages of chronic bronchitis and ultimately shutting off your oxygen supply completely.

If you stop smoking, you stop adding additional damage to your lungs. You slow the progression of the disease significantly and, in some case, your body can repair some of the damage that has been done. Although the most difficult decision that you have to make, it is the one that will have the most significant difference in the life of a person suffering from chronic bronchitis.

The good news is that there is quite a bit of help to the smoker today that can aid them in improving their chances of stopping this habit.

Smoking, including that of cigarette smoke and even marijuana smoking damages the lungs and is one of the general causes of chronic bronchitis.

## **What To Do**

To stop smoking, you have to consider your dependence on it. Talk to your doctor about your condition, why you smoke and how important it is to your daily lifestyle. When your doctor can understand your dependency, he or she is likely to recommend the appropriate treatment for your condition.

Smoking help can be obtained by simply calling on any of the smoking hotlines. Your doctor can offer help in the way of prescription medication as well. Support groups are offered in virtually every large city to give you the support you need from others that are stopping to smoke.

There are also pills and patches that help to reduce your dependence on nicotine. When you get your nicotine from a patch, for example, you don't do the damage that you do by smoking. Therefore, it is a safe option than using cigarettes to get that same relief.

Those that are victims of secondary smoke also need to take into consideration the very important need to remove that situation. If it is from your job, you need to find a way to remove yourself from that situation.

Secondary smoke can be just as bad and sometimes worse to the body and therefore needs to be a consideration. If your chronic bronchitis has been brought on by secondary smoke, it has to stop.

Stop smoking. It's the single most important thing that you can do to improve your longevity in the way of chronic bronchitis. If you continue to smoke, you continue to lessen your life span. Unfortunately, there is no better way to show you the importance of this single need.

### ***Improve Air Quality***

If you work in an area that the air quality is poor, then you need to improve this quality or stop working there. Chronic bronchitis can be brought on by the air that you breathe if it is not as clean as it should be.

Chemicals in the air as well as pollutants can do the same damage as smoking does. Therefore, you need to take into consideration the need for improvement of the air quality that you breathe.

### **What To Do**

If the air that you breathe is not healthy, then improvement is necessary. Remove contaminants that are in the air. Reduce the use of chemicals that can also cause pollution. If this is your work environment, speak to your supervisor about moving to a more clean air area. In addition, contact your human resource manager about your rights for clean air in the work place.

If you can not improve the quality of the air your breath in this manner, you can use air purifying tools to aid you. There are air purifiers on the market that can safely pull particles and contaminants from the air to aid in a healthy air space.

### ***To Alleviate Symptoms***

Those that suffer from acute bronchitis or chronic bronchitis can make some changes to their lifestyle to improve their daily living. To improve the quality of life that you experience, make these changes.

- Use a humidifier when sleeping. This puts moisture into the air, making your cough lessen. Steam will also work in the morning, for example, by taking a hot shower.

- Drink as much fluid as you can. Fluids are lost during a respiratory infection such as a cold or bronchitis. Drinking more will give your body what it needs.
- Get your rest. When you feel a bout of bronchitis coming on, you need to pull out of some of your activities and work and relax. You need additional sleep but also time to just sit. Conserving your energy is a very important need for those suffering from bronchitis.
- Get help. When you are sick, you need someone to help meet your needs. You should also seek the help of a doctor when your conditions and symptoms are severe as well as those times when you've had bronchitis more than two times in one year.

## ***Oxygen Therapy***

Many patients that have chronic bronchitis that has progressed into later stages will need the help of oxygen therapy to aid in improving their conditions.

Oxygen is prescribed by your doctor. If he or she does tell you that you need it, it's important for you to consider getting it. Doing so will aid in improving the quality of life that you have as well as giving your body the required amounts of oxygen to perform your daily functions.

Those that don't use the oxygen that their doctors tell them to use can face additional problems. For example, you may find yourself unable to exercise or do any physical movements. In addition, when the oxygen supply in the blood is too low for too long, a person can pass out or even worse slip into a comma.

Oxygen can be administered easily through the use of a tank and a nose piece. It is commonly used to help patients to get a good amount of oxygen into their blood quickly. If your doctor recommends it, don't go without it.

These things can improve your health and well being if you invest the time in implementing them. You also need to realize the need to follow your doctor's orders. If your doctor puts you on a restrictive exercise regimen, then you need to follow it.

Learning all you can about your condition is just as important. Seeking the help of your doctor and following his advice will also help. No matter how you feel, medications and treatments prescribed to you need to be followed.

## **Chapter 9: Diet, Nutrition And Alternative Medication**

In addition to what your doctor recommends to improve your condition, you can also use a number of alternative medications and treatments to improve your condition and quality of life.

One thing to note about alternative medications is that it is not a method of healing your condition. There is no way of knowing if a particular treatment will work for you or not. Each person reacts differently. In addition, you should insure that any treatment that you do use is not going to interact with the medications or treatments that your doctor prescribes.

### ***Nutrition***

What you eat and the health of your body is directly related to your condition. If you improve your nutrition intake, you improve your body's ability to manage the stresses that it is under.

Your doctor is likely to screen your health for nutritional lacking aspects. For example, those that have a body

weight assessment that is poor will need to consider weight loss. A body mass index that is between 22 and 27 is considered acceptable. In addition, your doctor will screen for cholesterol to determine if it is at the right level as well.

For those that need to consider additional help, here are a number of nutritional benefits you can incorporate into your daily life.

- Meet with a registered dietician to work out a meal plan that encourages health and well being, and weight loss if necessary. Your family doctor can help you to find this person.
- Eat more meals but make them much smaller. Implementing a diet that is basically fruits and vegetables with small portions of meat product is necessary.
- Increase the amount of fat that is taken into the body. Fat helps to decrease your levels of carbon dioxide production, which the lungs often have a difficult time pumping out of your body.
- Increase the number of foods that are eaten that have high numbers of vitamins and minerals in them. Foods with little to not nutritional value should be removed from the diet.

- Increase the amount of fluid that is taken in, especially water. Additional water helps to keep the body and cells hydrated as well as it keeps your mucus production thin and easy to manage.
- Do not consume additional calories that have no nutritional value. Increasing your weight can be detrimental to your health.

Your overall health and well being needs to improve, in order to give your body the necessary nutrients and fluids to maintain a healthy lifestyle. While you don't have to give up the foods that you enjoy, moderation of foods that are not healthy for you is the best way to gain healthy benefits.

Most importantly, add vegetables and fruits into your diet that are rich in nutrients. These give your body the tools to improve your health.

### ***Supplements***

Even though you should consume a diet that provides you with the nutrition that your body needs, most American diets do not include enough nutrients in them to provide the highest level of nutrition. Therefore, it is necessary to consider taking in supplements that can provide additional

nutrients and give your body even more of an ability to fight your condition.

Supplements for chronic bronchitis can and will aid your health. The first component of this is to take a good quality multi-vitamin. These are packed with nutrients that provide for supplementation to any diet. They are affordable and they are easily taken one time or two times per day.

If you are older, take a supplement that is geared towards the health of older adults. These have specialized formulas that include nutrients that are lacking in older people or that are needed more now than ever.

Some nutrients are even more beneficial to the patient with chronic bronchitis and those are described here:

- N-Acetyl-Cysteine (called NAC)

This type of supplement can be quite effective in helping your body to dissolve mucus. This supplement will improve your symptoms and help you to feel better.

- Zinc

Zinc is an excellent supplement to include in your diet. It provides help to the immune system which can help to keep infections and viruses that cause colds and respiratory infections at bay.

Additional supplements that you should take in include the following:

- Bromelain
- Lactobacillus
- Quercetin
- Vitamin C

These will aid your body in keeping infections and illness at bay. In addition, they can provide your body with the necessary fuel it needs to help overcome symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Most of these supplements can be purchased at your local drug store or you can get them online. Quality does count, though!

### ***Herbal Help***

In addition to supplementing your diet, you can also increase the herbal products that you consume. As an alternative medicine, herbs have been used for thousands of years to aid in healing and in generally well being.

Today, there is a growing demand for herbal remedies and solutions that can provide your body with help that conventional medication simply can not. Many people are

turning to herbs because they are less likely to have side effects than medications, too.

Do talk to your doctor before taking any type of herbal product to insure that they will not interact with the medications that you are currently taking. Never stop taking your medications without your doctor's approval first.

Here are a few herbal products that can aid in improving your bronchitis symptoms.

- **Barberry:** Known for its ability to fight off infection, barberry also aids in improving your immune system. Those that are ill can take barberry to lessen the effects of bronchitis.
- **Eucalyptus:** The use of eucalyptus has been in place for many years. You can use it to help treat your cough and the phlegm production of your condition. Purchase eucalyptus oil which will loosen your phlegm. In addition, you can purchase eucalyptus to inhale which will give you relief from your bronchitis symptoms as well as from coughing and even flue like symptoms.
- **Peppermint:** Peppermint is a common herbal product that can be used to treat coughing and congestion. It is used as a decongestant because it has menthol in it.

This will also help to thin out mucus and relieves the phlegm that most patients struggle with. In addition, peppermint and improve your sore throat and dry mouth symptoms.

- Slippery Elm: If your chronic bronchitis causes a sore throat, then this herbal product can be an ideal tool to improve your condition.
- Stinging Nettle: This herb has been shown to improve a cough by working as an expectorant which makes a cough more productive in getting the phlegm out of your system.

Additional tools that you can use include a variety of herbs like astragalus, Echinacea, garlic, ginger, ivy leaves, linden, red clover, and saw palmetto. Each offers its own unique way to helping you.

### **What To Do**

You don't need a prescription to get these herbs as most can be found at your nearby health food store. But, what you should do is talk with a herbologist to determine what the right types of herbal remedies will work for you.

They can help you by recommending what to take as well as how much to take and the method by which you should take it.

### ***Additional Tools For Relief***

In addition to these types of alternative medications, there are additional things that you can use that have shown to be beneficial.

For example, aromatherapy can be beneficial for those that are suffering from bronchitis. Use a humidifier to release essential oils into the air. Choose cedar wood, myrrh, jasmine, lavender, or tea tree. This is quite beneficial at night.

Acupuncture is another solution. Learn about acupuncture as a method of treating any illness including chronic bronchitis. Many have found it to deliver relief and even improve their health condition. A skilled acupuncturist is needed to make this a beneficial treatment.

Selecting these methods to gain help is a good way to go but couple them with the help of your medications. Keep your doctor informed about what you are taking as well.

## Conclusion

Bronchitis, either acute or chronic, is a serious condition that can lead to a life threatening condition. If you take the time now to explore ways to improve your health and well being, you can make a significant change.

Acute bronchitis is nothing more than a very bad cold. But, chronic bronchitis is a life threatening condition that can continue to worsen without any treatment. The good news is that if you catch it early enough, the progression of the disease can be made to be much less. In fact, you can survive it if you do what you need to.

Chronic bronchitis that is not received treatment until its advanced stages can be fatal. The damage that's done to your lungs can't be repaired and there is no guarantee that transplantation will work for you.

Therefore, it is essential for you to realize this and then begin treatment as soon as possible for your condition. Implement the changes mentioned in this e-book into your life today. Work with your doctor to determine the best treatment for your condition. Continue to utilize the types of treatment that are available to you so that you can

ultimately live a long and healthy life without the effects of bronchitis to worry about.