

Bronchiectasis

Bronchiectasis is a condition in which the airways widen abnormally. Airways are the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs.

Bronchiectasis is usually the result of an infection or other condition that injures the walls of your airways.

Children with primary immune deficiency diseases have a higher risk of developing bronchiectasis.

The most common signs of bronchiectasis are a daily cough (over months or years) production of large amounts of purulent sputum, coughing up blood, or shortness of breath.

Diagnosis is mainly based on symptoms and imaging such as chest x-rays and high-resolution CT scans of the chest. The aim of treatment is to control infections, relieve symptoms and prevent complications.

Smokers with bronchiectasis need to stop smoking. The practice of doing daily postural drainage of sputum can reduce the risk of chest infection by clearing excessive bronchial secretions and sputum retention.

Influenza vaccine can reduce upper respiratory infections in patients with bronchiectasis. Oral antibiotics are often prescribed to treat mild infections, while intravenous antibiotics are given to patients with severe infections. For patients with asthma associated with bronchiectasis, inhaled bronchodilators (a drug that widens the air passages of the lung and eases breathing) and corticosteroids (medication that reduces inflammation) should be used.

If bronchiectasis is severe, causing widespread destruction of the lung and respiratory failure, oxygen therapy or non-invasive ventilation may be used to relieve the symptoms and improve oxygenation. If all fails, lung transplantation may be a last resort.