

## Bronchiectasis

### Introduction

Bronchiectasis is a disease of the airways of the lungs where they become enlarged and inflamed. This damage can be caused by a multitude of insults, including infections, autoimmune disorders, aspiration, immune deficiencies, or genetic cause such as cystic fibrosis. The airways in bronchiectasis no longer clear mucus or bacteria effectively. This results in further damage and symptoms such as cough, sputum production, and breathlessness.

### Symptoms

- Daily coughing, lasting months or years
- Regular production of copious amounts of sputum
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath/wheezing

### Diagnosis

The evaluation of bronchiectasis includes:

- Complete medical history and physical examination by one of our pulmonologists
- Pulmonary function tests
- A CT of the chest to identify the abnormal airways along with the presence of other associated findings
- Other tests to help identify the underlying causes- blood tests, genetic screenings, sputum cultures, etc...

### Treatment

Treatment of bronchiectasis requires long term management of multiple factors to help improve quality of life. This includes:

- Improve clearance of mucus- inhaled medications (bronchodilators, inhaled steroids), airway clearance techniques such as a flutter valve
- Treat infections with antibiotics
- Treat associated conditions/underlying causes such as immune deficiencies, aspiration/reflux, or autoimmune disorder
- Pulmonary rehab to help improve symptoms, exercise tolerance, and muscle strength
- Occasionally surgery is required