



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Bronchiectasis

Bronchiectasis is a condition where the lung's bronchial tubes become damaged, thickened, and widened. While there is no cure for bronchiectasis, it is manageable. The first step in getting vital treatment is to better understand bronchiectasis so that you are better able to communicate with your doctor. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Antibiotics	Bronchiectasis is usually treated with antibiotics because it is common for bacteria to infect the bronchi, the main passageways into the lungs. Some antibiotics are inhaled using a nebulizer.
Anticholinergic Medicine	Anticholinergics are bronchodilator medicines that help open lung airways.
Beclomethasone Dipropionate	This medication is available as an inhaler for treating bronchiectasis. It may reduce airway inflammation and other symptoms of bronchiectasis, including shortness of breath and wheezing.
Bronchodilators	Inhaled medicines that make it easier to breathe because they relax the muscles of the airways. Short-acting bronchodilators are used as rescue medicines when there is a need for quick relief, such as with shortness of breath. Long-acting bronchodilators are used daily to manage symptoms of bronchiectasis.
Chest Physiotherapy (CPT)	CPT is used by physical and respiratory therapists for treating bronchiectasis. The goal is to loosen secretions so they can be easily expelled from a person's airway passages. CPT helps improve breathing through this indirect removal of mucus. Using a bronchodilator in advance helps maximize benefits.
Cystic Fibrosis	Bronchiectasis is often a part of cystic fibrosis, a lung disease that causes mucus in the body to become thick and sticky. The build-up of mucus eventually leads to problems in many of the body's organs, especially the lungs. Bronchiectasis can develop on its own without cystic fibrosis.
Inhaled Steroid Therapy	Inhaled steroid therapy can help to improve bronchiectasis symptoms, including inflammation, and reduce the risk for infection. However, steroid therapy can come with unwanted side effects.
Macrolides	Macrolides are a type of antibiotic that kill bacteria and help to reduce inflammation in the bronchi.
Mucus	Mucus (also called phlegm or sputum) is one of the most common symptoms of bronchiectasis. An excess amount tends to build up in abnormally widened airways, increasing the risk for infection.



Questions to Ask (continued)

About Diagnosis

- Do I need to provide mucus samples?
- Will I need any imaging, including chest X-rays?
- What breathing tests will I need?
- Is bronchiectasis contagious?
- Are infections a concern?

About Treatment

- What if my medications don't help me to feel better?
- Should I take any over-the-counter treatments for cough and/or cold?
- What medications can help reduce my risk for infection?
- Do I need pulmonary rehabilitation?
- Do I need to see a physiotherapist?
- Should I carry a rescue inhaler?
- What airway exercises can help with keeping my chest clear?
- What lifestyle changes should I make?

About Coping

- What are the signs of an exacerbation?
- What should I do if I experience an exacerbation?
- What can I do to prevent an exacerbation?
- How do I manage the emotional effects of bronchiectasis?
- Is it okay for me to stay active?
