

HOW TO TREAT BRONCHIECTASIS

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Bronchiectasis is due to damage to the large to medium airways at some earlier point in time.

You can remain healthy for many years despite this but at some stage the damaged airways become colonised with common bacteria, fungi or by bacteria from the tuberculosis family.

This can lead to recurrent cough, sputum which can become chronic and sinus disease is also very common.

The traditional treatment is to use recurrent antibiotics when you are sick and although this can be useful in acute episodes of deterioration it is also a setting in which bacteria resistant to antibiotics can develop and runs the risk of developing further lung damage.

We recommend the following to reduce the symptoms of bronchiectasis with the main goal to keep the airways dry and stopping progression of lung damage.

- a) Daily exercise (walking or other forms of exercise)
- b) Vaccinations for influenza, pneumonia and whooping cough
- c) An asthma puffer that has a long acting bronchodilator and steroid combined
- d) Treat acute infections early
- e) Physiotherapy to learn airway clearance techniques

If there is a lot of chronic secretions despite the above approach a 6 month course of Azithromycin is recommended.

If the disease is localised to one part of the lung surgery may be recommended.

If the cause of the bronchiectasis is amenable to treatment such as low immunoglobulins then treatment is recommended to prevent further disease.

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