

Bronchiectasis Self- Management Plan

Respiratory

Patient Information Leaflet

Your Bronchiectasis Management Plan

This plan is designed to help you manage your day to day symptoms and assist you in noticing when your condition starts to change.

There are several reasons why your chest symptoms may change day to day and these include:

- Not drinking enough fluid which can make your sputum more sticky and difficult to clear. This may happen if you have an upset tummy or you lose your appetite.
- Not clearing your secretions sufficiently

In order to know when your symptoms are changing you will need to understand what is '**normal**' for you. This will allow you to monitor any changes and start the appropriate plan of action.

Your plan of action is unique to you.

Sometimes this may mean that you need to carry out your chest clearance exercises more often or it may mean that you need to start taking your 'rescue medication'. This plan will help you choose what is the correct course of action.

Date plan started.....

Date assessed by the physiotherapist.....

My Usual Symptoms Day to Day

(not during a chest infection or flare up)

I normally cough

- Most of the day
- Mostly mornings
- Hardly ever

- Only with a chest infection
- Other (please state)

.....

The amount of sputum I clear daily is

- Nothing
- A pea size amount
- 1/2 a teaspoon
- A full teaspoon

- 1/2 egg cup full
- Full egg cup
- Other (please state)

.....

My sputum colour is normally

.....
.....
.....

My sputum is usually also (please describe)

.....
.....
.....

How to manage your chest day to day

There are some simple things you can do to help you stay well.

Avoiding chest infections is the best way to prevent further deterioration of your bronchiectasis. To do this a strong immune system helps.

- Carry out daily chest clearance so that secretions do not build up in your lungs. Your physiotherapist will help and advise you on the techniques that are best for you.
- Staying active and exercising helps to boost the immune system and helps to loosen and clear sputum.
- A well balanced diet and adequate fluid intake are essential.
- Take your medication and inhalers (if you are on them) as prescribed and never allow your medicines to run out.
- Keep 'rescue medication' at home (antibiotics)
- Ensure that you've had a pneumonia vaccine (this is a one off injection) and don't miss having an annual flu vaccine.
- Don't smoke and avoid smoky atmospheres. Ask your practice nurse if you need any further advice.
- Avoid visiting anyone who is unwell with a cold, flu or chest infection, you will be more susceptible to catching bugs that affect your chest.
- Effective hand washing is the best way to stop the spread of most infections
- Know how much sputum you expectorate every day, its texture, and colour.

How to recognise a chest infection

Signs *(you may have some or most of these):*

- Feeling generally unwell and you may have a temperature
- Coughing up more sputum than normal or
- Coughing up less sputum than normal
- Sputum is more sticky and difficult to clear
- Your sputum has changed colour, usually going darker but not always
- Worsening breathlessness
- Chest becomes tight and possibly wheezy
- Feeling more tired
- You have started to get a bad taste in your mouth

I also get the following symptoms:

.....

.....

.....

.....

What action should I take if I have a chest infection?

1. Firstly produce a sputum specimen, and hand it into your GP surgery as soon as you are able. If you cannot get the specimen to your GP surgery for a day or two (e.g.: over the weekend) then keep the specimen in the fridge.
2. Start your rescue antibiotics if they have been prescribed.
3. Carry out your chest clearance techniques more often.
4. Drink plenty of fluid to prevent your secretions becoming more sticky .

Where should I go to seek advice and help when I'm not well?

Routine
GP Visit



When? If you feel your bronchiectasis is worse but no change in the amount, stickiness, or colour of your sputum. When there is no improvement within 48 hours, make a GP appointment.

Action. Take sputum sample to your GP but do not start antibiotics until you have seen your GP.

Urgent GP
Visit



When? For all chest infections where you feel unwell, you are coughing up more sputum, there is worsening colour of sputum or worsening breathlessness **OR** if you are coughing up blood **OR** if you are getting chest pain when breathing in.

Action. Collect sputum sample and then start antibiotics immediately without waiting for results of sputum sample.

Emergency
GP or 999



When? If you are confused or drowsy **OR** coughing up large amounts of blood **OR** you are severely breathless (eg: breathless whilst talking).

Action. Call the emergency GP first. Collect sputum sample if feasible and then start your antibiotics immediately without waiting for sputum results.

Record of Infection and Antibiotic Treatment

Date	Sputum Growth	Antibiotic Given	Dose

Antibiotic courses should generally be for at least 2 weeks as per the British Thoracic Society Guidelines

Your GP practice should test your sputum at least once a year to ensure no new bugs are present.

Remember

It is important to finish the full course of your antibiotics unless advised otherwise by your health care practitioner.

Please encourage your health care practitioner to complete the sputum specimen / antibiotic chart above.

Additional Information or Reminders

Other formats

If you would like to receive this information in an alternative format, then please contact : **01539 795497**

Travelling to our hospitals

For the best way to plan your journey visit our website: <http://www.uhmb.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS): **01539 795497**

Useful Contact Details

NHS Direct (24 hour health advice): **111**

Your Information:

If you would like to know how we use, share, disclose and secure your information and your rights of access to the information we hold about you, visit the Trust's website: <http://www.uhmb.nhs.uk/> or contact Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) **01539 795497**

References

Details of the references used in writing this leaflet are available on request from: Patient Information Officer **01524 512476**

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment, please speak to a member of staff or contact PALS: **01539 795497**



SMOKEFREE

UHMBT is a no smoking Trust. Smoking is not permitted on any of the hospital sites. Giving up smoking is the best thing you can do for your health.

Contact your local NHS stop smoking service:

NHS North Lancashire: **01524 845145**

NHS Cumbria: **01900 324222**

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be cared for;
a great place
to work**

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Author: Victoria Eden

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