



Lower Respiratory Infections

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What is a lower respiratory infection?

The lower respiratory system includes the lungs and bronchial tubes (which connect your windpipe to your lungs). The most common lower respiratory infections are bronchitis, an inflammation of the bronchial tubes, and pneumonia, an infection in your lung tissue.



Why is it significant?

Lower respiratory infections can sometimes be life-threatening, especially if you're older or already dealing with another medical condition.



What else should I be aware of?

Antibiotics are neither an appropriate nor effective treatment for some lower respiratory infections (for example, viral bronchitis). Unnecessary use of antibiotics can cause allergic reactions and digestive upset, including diarrhea, and can interact with other medications. It can also kill bacteria that are good for your body, while enabling harmful bacteria to become more resistant to drugs.



What can I do?

- ✓ Watch for signs of bronchitis or pneumonia. These include wheezing, coughing, a high fever that doesn't go away, chest pains when coughing or taking deep breaths, and trouble breathing. As well, blood and/or green, yellow, brown or greyish mucus may be expelled when coughing. If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your doctor.
- ✓ If your symptoms are less severe, stay at home and rest. Drink plenty of water

and other clear fluids. Home remedies, such as chicken soup and honey, can help to ease symptoms.

- ✓ Occasionally, bronchitis may develop into pneumonia. If you experience high prolonged fever or severe, worsening symptoms that won't go away, contact your doctor.



- ✓ Learn more about lower respiratory infections at www.makinghealthhappen.com.



What can I take?

Pneumonia and severe bronchitis may require treatment with antibiotics. If you've been prescribed an antibiotic, take it completely and as instructed. Do not save the antibiotic for future use. Once you've recovered, good bacteria (probiotics) can help your immune and digestive systems to get back to normal; these can be purchased at your local pharmacy.



Go to MakingHealthHappen.com and enter **rsp11** in the search box to learn more about Lower Respiratory Infections.