

Acute bronchitis

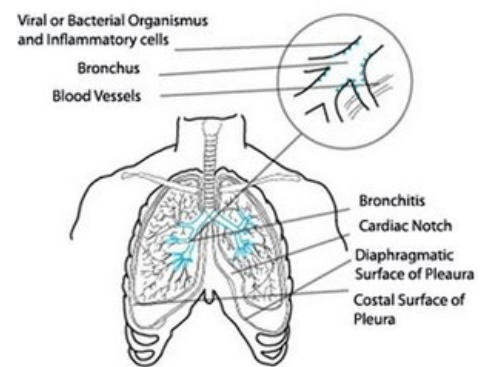
Acute bronchitis is a transient inflammation of the large and medium airways. It may occur alone or as part of inflammation that also affects the surrounding lung parenchyma. It is very common in children.

Etiology

The causative agents are mainly **viruses**: parainfluenza and influenza, rhinoviruses, adenoviruses (the picture may be similar to pertussis), RSV, but also **bacteria** (less frequently): pneumococcus, haemophilus, mycoplasma, ...

Clinical picture

The main symptom is **cough**. The disease begins with fever or subfebrile malaise with a feeling of general malaise. The cough starts as **dry**, irritating, unproductive, and may be painful. Bronchitis is usually *preceded by inflammation of the upper respiratory tract* (rhinosinusitis, nasopharyngitis). The longer the cough lasts, the more likely it is to become productive. In uncomplicated bronchitis - children are not congested, the patient is subfebrile to afebrile, mucus production decreases and the cough disappears in 7-10 days.



Schematic representation of acute bronchitis

Diagnosis

Physical examination

- lung auscultation: **grunts** (rales) of large, medium and small bubbles, **squeaks** - in inspiration and expiration,
- lung tapping is full and clear.

Laboratory examination: leucocytes are not elevated (if so, it is probably a bacterial infection).

Functional lung examination: some degree of obstruction.

Heart-lung X-ray: normal or mildly accentuated bronchovascular pattern.

Therapy

For uncomplicated bronchitis, **supportive therapy**: fluids, warm moist air, vitamins and antipyretics, bed rest.

For dry exhausting cough - expectorants and antitussives.

If a bacterial infection is suspected - ATB.

Complications

Complications are rare and include otitis media, sinusitis, pneumonia.

References

Related articles

- Chronic bronchitis
- Obstructive bronchitis
- Recurrent bronchitis
- Asthma
- Bronchiolitis
- Acute laryngitis
- COPD

References used

- MUNTAU, Ania Carolina. *Pediatrics*. 4. edition. Prague : Grada, 2009. 581 pp. ISBN 978-80-247-2525-3.
- BENES, Jiří. *Study Materials* [online]. ©2007. [cit. 2009]. <<http://jirben.wz.cz>>.

