



## Information for Consumers - Respiratory Illness (Acute)

This article tells you about acute respiratory illness and how it is diagnosed, including what imaging tests you may need to have.

### What is acute respiratory illness?

Acute respiratory illness affects the lungs and airways. Most acute respiratory illnesses are viral infections such as the common cold, which usually goes away without antibiotics.

Sometimes, you may develop a more severe infection, such as bronchitis or pneumonia. If this happens, your doctor may give you a prescription for antibiotics.

### Diagnosis

Most people with acute respiratory illness do not need imaging tests for diagnosis. Sometimes, your doctor may request a chest x-ray to help decide whether you need further treatment and what treatment might be best.

### Results

The amount of time it takes for you to get your results will differ depending on where you get your scans done. If you have a chest x-ray, a radiology doctor will look at the pictures and write a report for your doctor.

Further tests (e.g. a CT scan) may be necessary depending on the result of the chest x-ray, or if you do not respond to treatment within a reasonable time.

### Further information

For more detailed information, please access InsideRadiology at: [www.insideradiology.com.au](http://www.insideradiology.com.au)

This is a resource produced especially for consumers by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists: [www.ranzcr.edu.au](http://www.ranzcr.edu.au)

A guide to gathering information that you may need for making informed decisions is published by the Consumers' Health Council of Australia at: <https://chf.org.au>

If you would like to look at other relevant articles, please access the following:

- [Chest X-ray](#)
- [CT scan](#)
- [Radiation risks of x-rays and scans](#)



Or access the Diagnostic Imaging Pathways website at:  
[www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/index.php/consumer-info](http://www.imagingpathways.health.wa.gov.au/index.php/consumer-info)

Or if you have questions or require any further information please contact your doctor or speak to the staff where you are going to have your procedure.

## References

Encyclopaedia of Public Health: Acute Respiratory Diseases: [www.answers.com/topic/acute-respiratory-disease](http://www.answers.com/topic/acute-respiratory-disease)

Definition of respiratory illness: [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com)

## Consumer participation

This information has been reviewed by representatives from the following groups:

- Aboriginal people
- People with disabilities
- Seniors
- CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)
- The Health Consumers' Council

## Feedback

All feedback, comments and suggestions regarding consumer information at Diagnostic Imaging Pathways are welcome. Please direct them to the following email address: [dipfeedback@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:dipfeedback@health.wa.gov.au)

## Disclaimer

This article is intended as general information only. The Department of Health cannot accept any legal liability arising from its use. The information is kept as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that it is always subject to change.

## Copyright

© Copyright 2017, Department of Health Western Australia. All Rights Reserved. This article and its content has been prepared by The Department of Health, Western Australia and is protected by copyright.

**Date reviewed: July 2017**

**Date of next review: July 2019**