

Chronic Suppurative Lung Disease/Bronchiectasis (Chronic Lung Sickness)

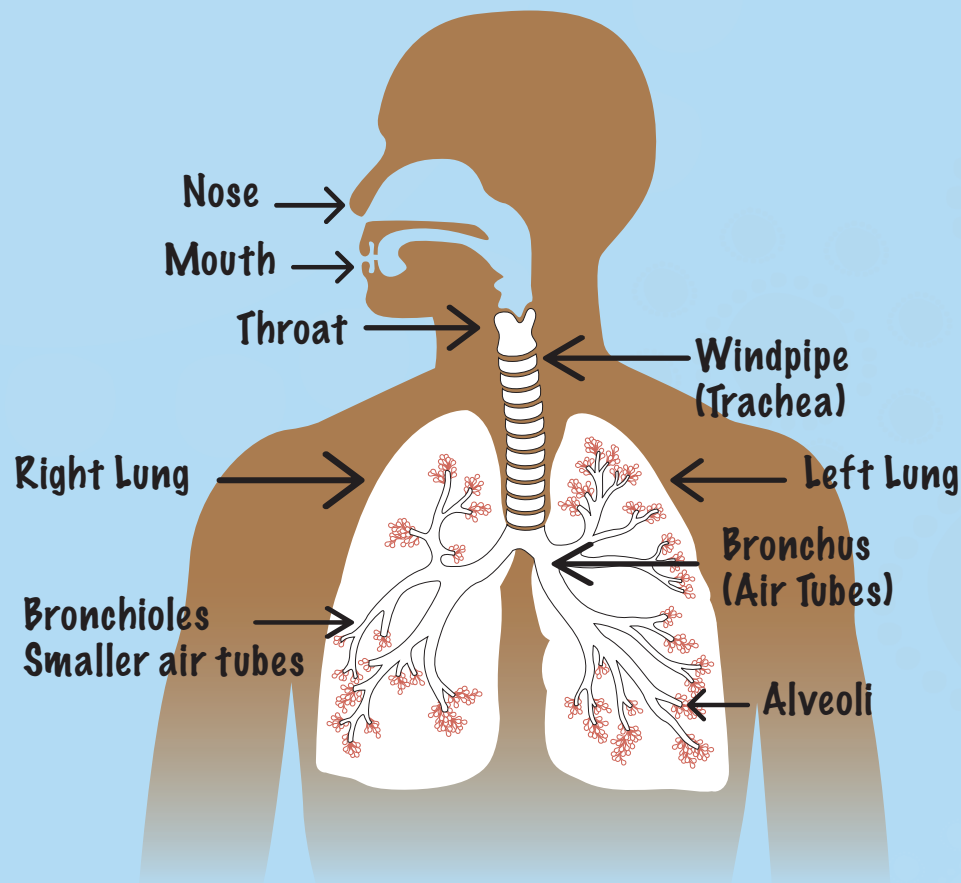


The lungs

- You have two lungs.
- They sit inside your chest, above your stomach and surround your heart.
- The lungs have a very important job inside your body.



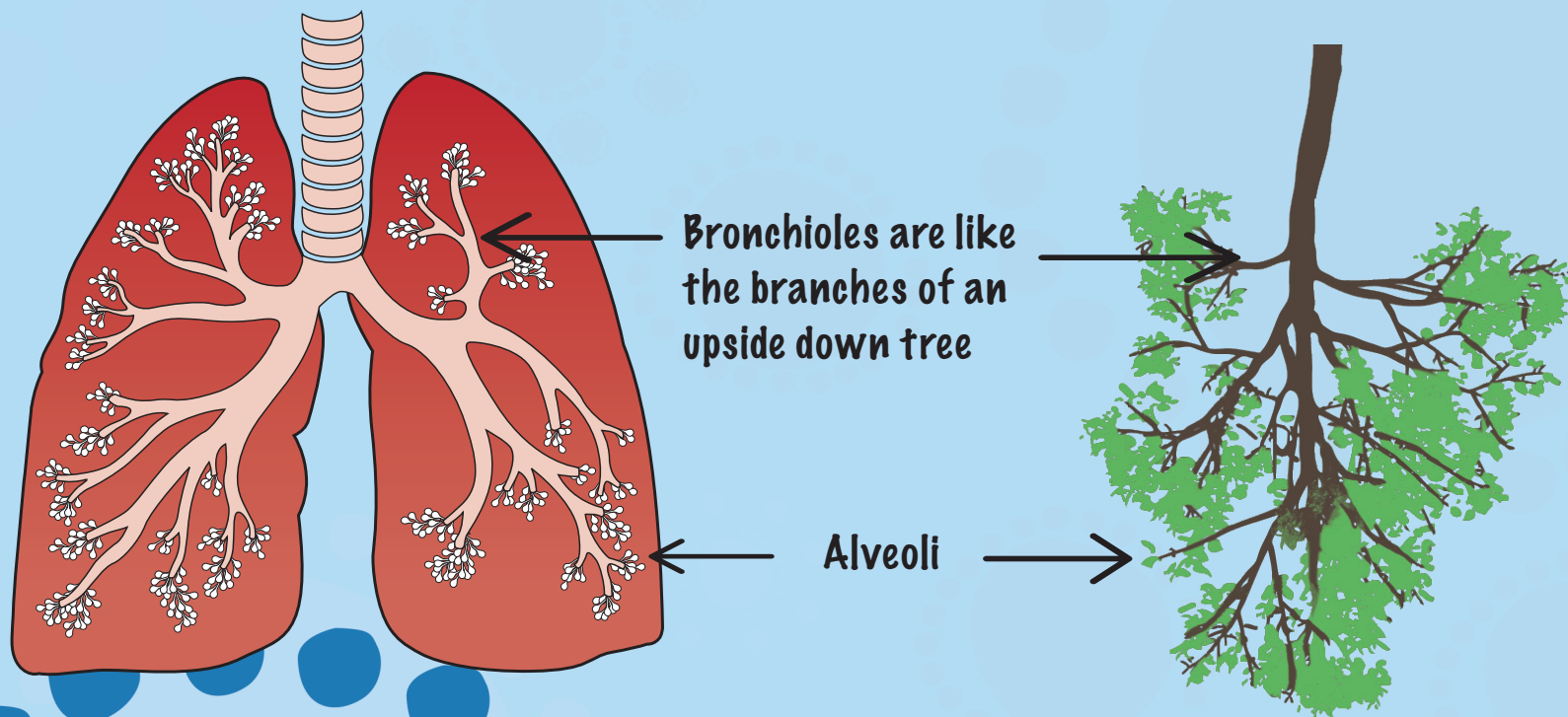
The lungs



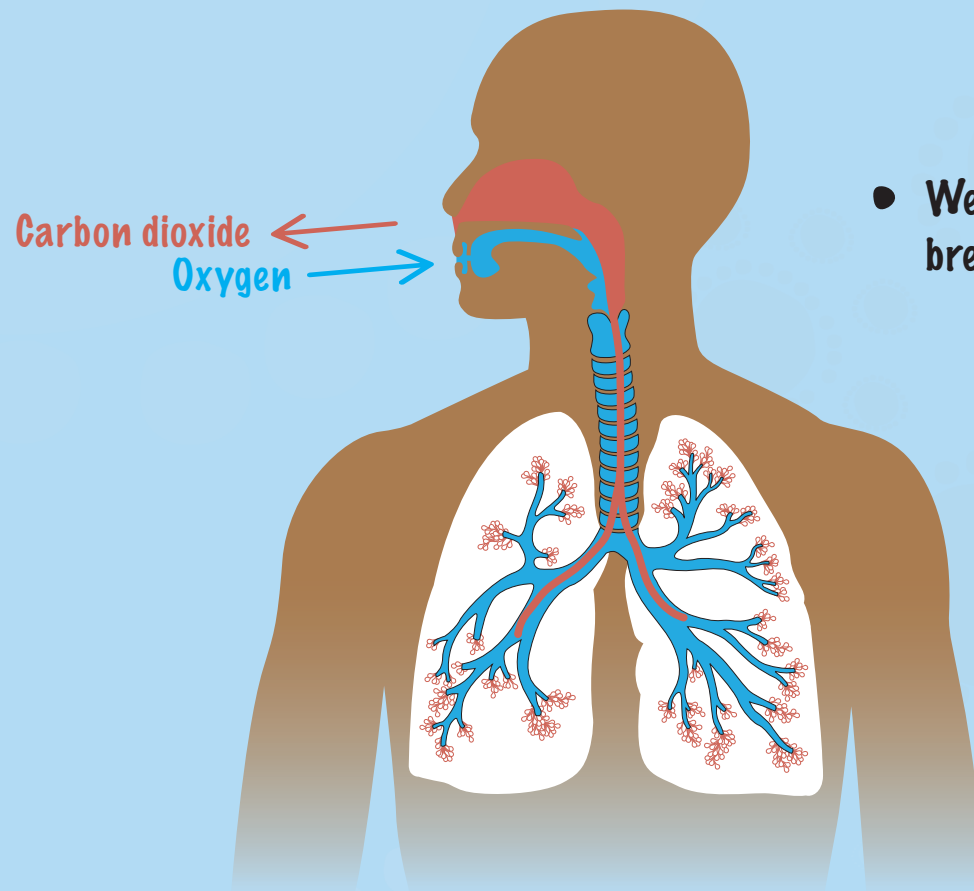
- When we breathe in air it enters our body as oxygen.
- The air enters in through our mouth/nose and travels down our main windpipe (trachea).
- The wind pipe then divides into two smaller air tubes.
- One air tube goes into the left lung and one into the right lung (left and right bronchus).
- The air tubes then branch out into smaller air tubes (bronchioles).

The lungs

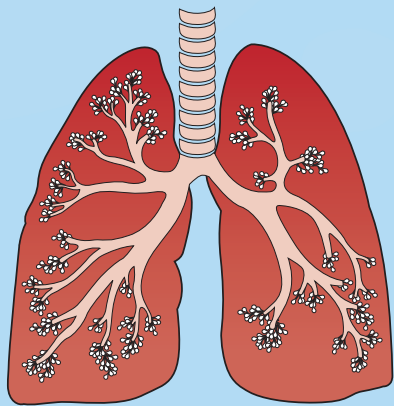
- The smaller air tubes (bronchioles) look like the branches of an upside down tree. At the end of the bronchioles are tiny little air sacs that look like tiny bunches of grapes, these are called alveoli.
- The air sacs (alveoli) have an important job of giving the good air (oxygen) to our blood and taking the used air (carbon dioxide) out.



The lungs



- We breathe in good air called **oxygen** and we breathe out used air called **carbon dioxide**.
- The good air (**oxygen**) we breathe goes into our lungs then goes into our blood. **Oxygen** gives our body energy to work properly.



Chronic Suppurative Lung Disease/Bronchiectasis (Chronic Lung Sickness)

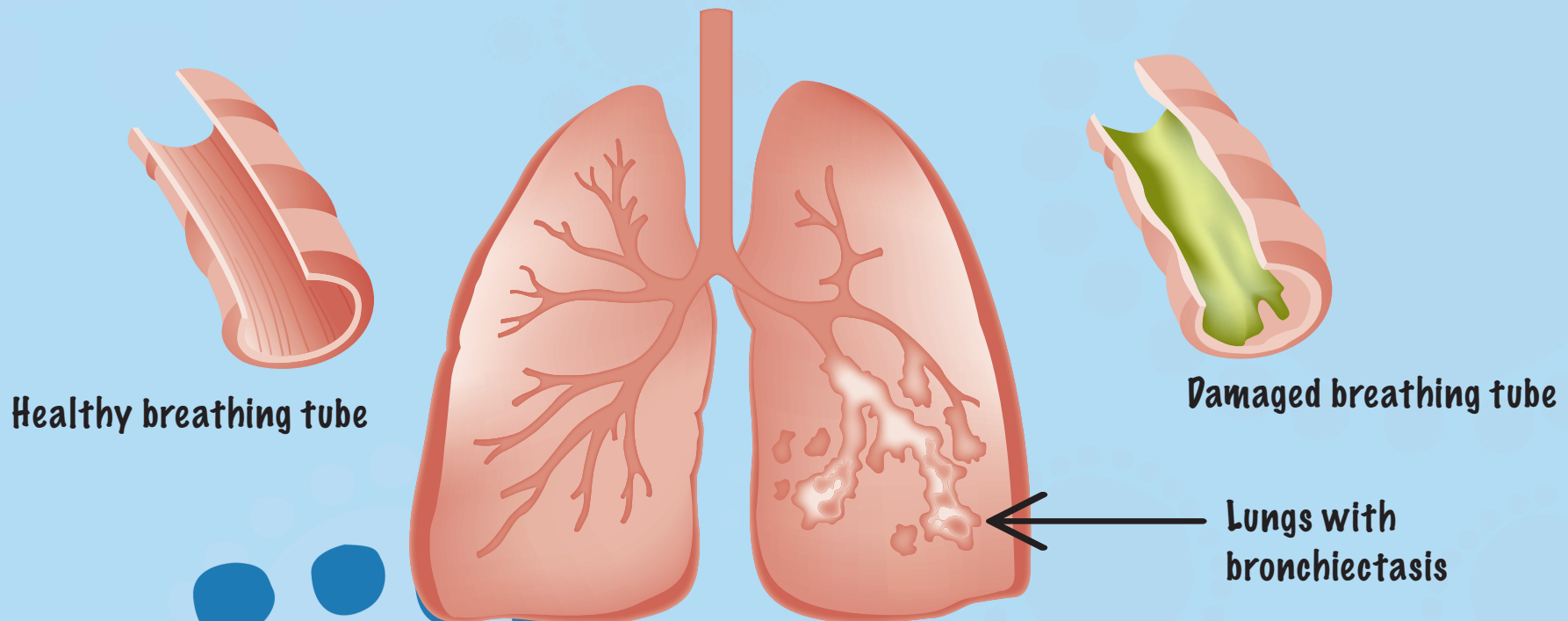
What is chronic lung sickness?

- **Chronic lung disease is a bad lung sickness that lots of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have.**
- **The breathing tubes have been damaged and don't work as well as healthy breathing tubes (bronchioles).**
- **Your child may have a wet sounding cough which comes and goes or stays for a long time.**
- **Children with chronic lung disease have weaker lungs and get sick more often with bad chest infections.**



Bronchiectasis

- Your doctor will call chronic lung sickness, 'bronchiectasis'. This disease causes the breathing tubes to become damaged.
- Damaged airways causes lots of spit to sit inside the breathing tubes. Sometimes it can be hard to get rid of, which causes cough and infections.



What causes chronic lung sickness?



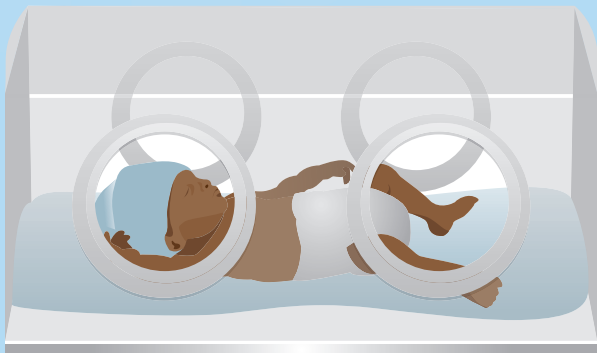
- **Lots of chest infections (pneumonia) when children are young.**



- **Measles.**
- **Blockage in the airway.**

Risks for causing chronic lung sickness

- Some children may be born with a low immune system.
- Too many people living in one house (overcrowding).
- Small babies.



Signs and symptoms

- **Wet sounding cough that lasts a long time or keeps coming back.**
- **Coughing up spit, which can be green/yellow.**
- **Difficulty breathing/short wind, not being able to keep up with other children when running around.**
- **Feeling tired and weak.**
- **Sometimes rounded finger tips (clubbing).**



What if my child needs to go to hospital?

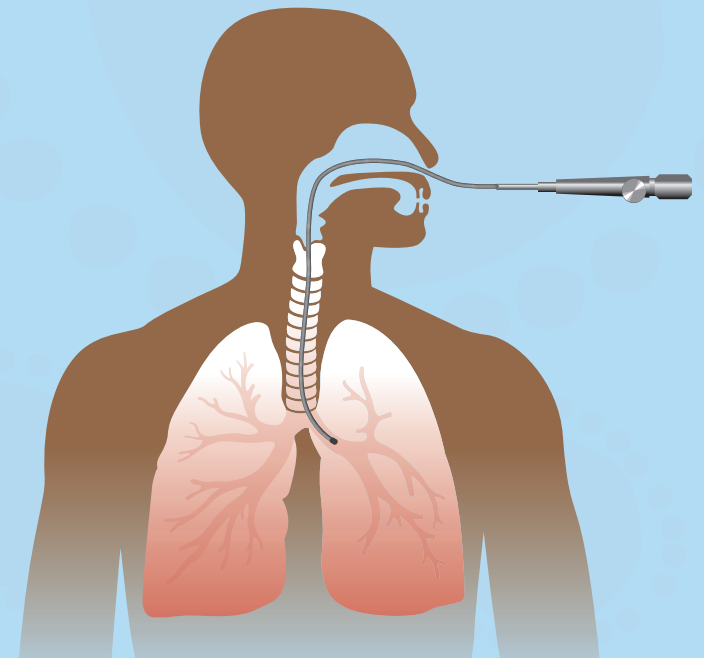
- If your child does not get better with medicine, they might need to come into hospital to have some stronger medicine in a drip.
- They might need to stay in hospital for one or two weeks. Your nurse or doctor will help answer any questions you may have.



Tests for chronic lung sickness/ bronchiectasis

There are tests that can help your doctor decide if your child has chronic suppurative lung disease or bronchiectasis. Your child may need to go to hospital to have these tests done:

- **Chest x-ray.**
- **Chest CT scan to take a closer look at their lungs (special x-ray).**
- **Bronchoscopy to look inside their breathing tubes.**



Tests your child might have in hospital



- Blood test.
- Nose/throat swab to look at the germs that are causing infections.
- Breathing test.



Physiotherapy

- **Your child may be seen by a physiotherapist in hospital who will show you some exercises.**
- **These exercises can be done everyday.**
- **Physiotherapy helps to loosen up the spit inside your lungs.**
- **Blowing bubbles and balloons can help exercise the lungs.**



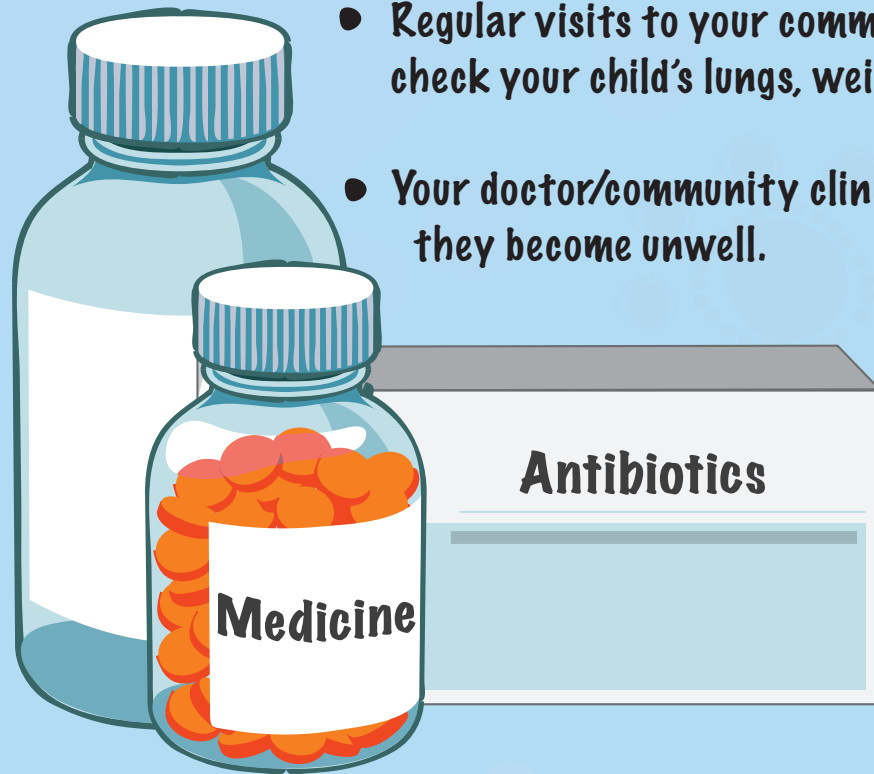
How do I know if my child becomes unwell?

- Cough is getting worse.
- Spit is getting darker in colour from clear to yellow or dark green.
- Has short wind.
- Feeling extra hot/cold.
- Feeling more tired.
- Eating or drinking less.



Ways to help improve your child's lungs

- Regular visits to your community health clinic for check ups. The nurses/doctors will check your child's lungs, weight and height to make sure they are growing well.
- Your doctor/community clinic will give your child antibiotics to take if they become unwell.



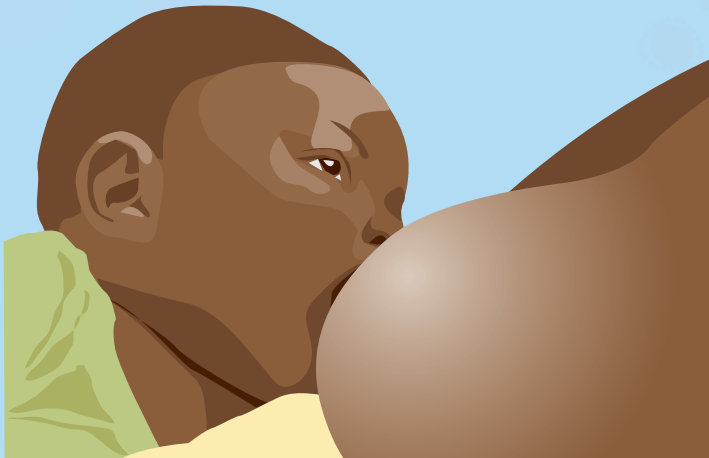
Ways to help improve your child's lungs

- Plenty of exercise like hunting, dancing, sports and playing.
- Plenty of good food.
- Children with chronic lung sickness need more food than other children to make their lungs stronger.



Ways to help improve your child's lungs

- **Breastfeeding to help make your baby strong.**
- **Keep immunisations up-to-date.**
- **Physiotherapy: There are things that can be done everyday. Blowing bubbles and balloons can help exercise the lungs.**



Things to remember

- **Nose blowing and coughing can help get rid of spit. Use tissue or toilet paper to stop germs from spreading.**
- **Keeping hands, face and skin clean will help stop germs from spreading.**
- **Avoid smoking around children, especially in cars and inside the house.**
- **Keep children away from open fire/smoke.**



What will happen to my child when they grow up?

- It is important to help manage your child's chronic lung sickness.
- Children with weak lungs can go on to have other problems later in life like:
 - Short wind
 - Heart problems
 - Earlier death



Why are healthy lungs important?

- The lungs in children are still growing, so we have to look after them.
- Lung sickness is one of the most common reasons why Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people need to go to hospital.
- Having strong lungs helps children to grow, live longer, play and learn.



Acknowledgments



The Chronic Suppurative Lung Disease/Bronchiectasis flipchart was developed in consultation with Menzies School of Health Research, The Australian Lung Foundation, Asthma Foundation Northern Territory and the Menzies School of Health Research Indigenous Reference Group.



*"When you can't breathe...
nothing else matters"™*



To order more resources or to provide feedback please email:
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