

Haemoptysis

Haemoptysis is the medical term for coughing up blood and can be one of the most alarming complications of cystic fibrosis (CF).

Many people with CF will, at some time, have blood stained mucus. If, however, you cough up blood for the first time, or if the amount of blood coughed up is more than a teaspoon (5ml), you should contact your CF clinic. If there is a lot of blood or the bleeding does not stop, call 000 immediately.

Haemoptysis is defined as:

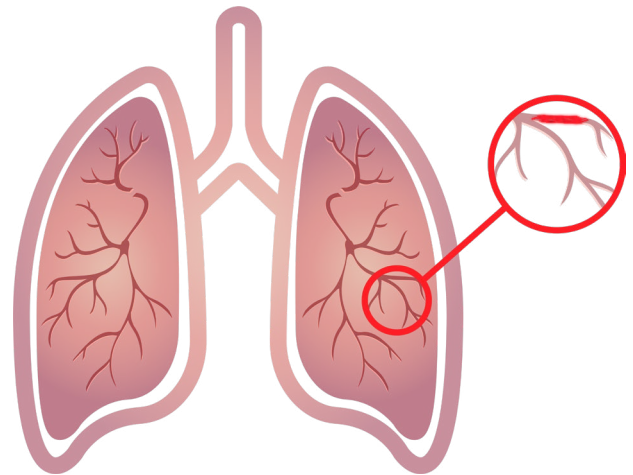
- Scant <5ml
- Mild-moderate 5-240ml and
- Severe haemoptysis, more than 240ml in 24 hours.

What Causes Haemoptysis?

Haemoptysis is often related to a lung infection. It is thought the infection irritates an area of the lung and blood vessel causing it to bleed. Although the blood vessel will close up in the normal clotting process, there is no place for the blood in the airway to go except to be coughed up in the sputum.

How is it Treated?

Scant haemoptysis may not require treatment. Mild to moderate haemoptysis may require treatment with antibiotics for an exacerbation. You may also be given medication to help the blood clot. Airway clearance treatments may be modified depending on the amount of bleeding.



If you experience severe haemoptysis, dial 000. You will be admitted to hospital for treatment. CF patients with severe haemoptysis are generally treated with bronchial artery embolization. Airway clearance will be stopped and recommenced on the advice of your CF team.

It is difficult to relate a cause to the haemoptysis incident. It is worthwhile to take note of any new medications or activities if you think they may be associated with the bleeding, and let your CF team know. Haemoptysis is different for everyone and something you may never experience.

Useful Resources

- [What to Do Before You Start Coughing Up Blood \(CF Foundation\)](#)
- [Haemoptysis \(Health Direct\)](#)

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Disclaimer: This publication is for general education and information purposes. Contact a qualified healthcare professional for any medical advice needed.
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