

## Coloured sputum is not a reason for antibiotics

In patients with “so-called” acute bronchitis (productive cough, malaise, difficulty breathing, wheezing), the presence of coloured (yellow, green or brown) sputum is associated with an increased risk of bacterial infection: 22 - 24% in people with coloured sputum vs 5 - 6% in people with clear or white sputum. However, antibiotic treatment has no clinical benefit in patients with coloured sputum.

To confirm pneumonia as a cause of cough, the patient would need to be sicker, febrile, have chest pain, and have consistent pneumonia breath sounds.<sup>1</sup>

Reference:

1. [Coloured sputum is not a reason for antibiotic treatment](#) Antibiotic Conservation Aotearoa

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