



# CAYMAN ANIMAL HOSPITAL

## Bronchitis

The purpose of the respiratory system is to provide an area where the body can absorb oxygen during inspiration and eliminate carbon dioxide during expiration. The respiratory system consists of two portions: the conducting portion and the respiratory portion. The conducting portion transports air to and from the lungs. This consists of the nose, pharynx (throat), larynx (voice box), trachea (windpipe) and bronchi (small air passages). The respiratory portion, where the gas exchange occurs, consists of the bronchioles (microscopic air tubes) and lungs.

Before entering the lungs, the trachea (windpipe) divides into a right primary bronchus which goes to the right lung, and a left primary bronchus which goes to the left lung. After entering the lungs, each bronchus divides many times, establishing a network of small air tubes. This network of air tubes (bronchioles) resembles the branches of a tree. The small, microscopic bronchioles terminate in the alveolus, the area of the lungs where air exchange takes place.

Bronchitis is an inflammation of the inside lining of the bronchial tubes.

Causes of bronchitis are numerous. Some of them include: bacterial and viral infections, environmental pollutants, heartworm disease, cardiac (heart) problems, lungworm infection, and tumors.

The most common symptom of bronchitis is coughing.

A complete physical examination by a veterinarian is necessary to establish the diagnosis of bronchitis. Often, a detailed examination is performed. Laboratory tests and x-rays are useful for determining the cause of bronchitis.