Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection in one or both lungs. It causes the air sacs in the lungs to get inflamed. It is sometimes called a chest infection. Pneumonia can be caused by viruses or bacteria. Viruses are the most common cause.

What are the symptoms of pneumonia?
The symptoms of pneumonia include:
› cough, which may produce phlegm (mucus)
› chest pain when you breathe or cough
› fatigue (tiredness)
› fever, sweating, shaking, chills
› nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting (throwing up), or diarrhea (loose poop)
› shortness of breath, fast and/or trouble breathing
› feeling grumpy
› fast heartbeat

See your family health care provider if you have trouble breathing, chest pain, fever (39° C/102° F or higher) that is not getting better, or a cough that doesn’t go away.
Who is at risk for pneumonia?
You are at a higher risk for pneumonia if you:
› are over 65 years old
› are younger than 2 years old
› have a weak immune system because of another health condition, chemotherapy, or medication that lowers your immune system’s strength — having a weak immune system lowers your body’s ability to fight infection
› smoke
› have a head cold or a throat infection
› have a poor diet
› have a chronic disease such as asthma or COPD
› abuse alcohol
› have had pneumonia before
How is pneumonia diagnosed?

A stethoscope will be used to listen to your lungs for abnormal sounds. You may also have one or more of the following tests:

› blood tests
› chest X-ray
› pulse oximetry (measures the oxygen in your blood)
› sputum (spit) test
› CT scan
› pleural fluid culture (fluid from your lung area will be checked)

How is pneumonia treated?

• Pneumonia is treated by curing the infection and preventing complications. Treatment may include:
  › fever and/or pain medicine (take as needed)
• You may be prescribed antibiotic pills for you. It is important that you take all of your antibiotic pills even if you start to feel better.
Medications prescribed:

Keep taking your usual medications:

To help you recover quickly:

• Get plenty of rest.
• Drink plenty of fluids (if you are not on a fluid restricted diet).
• Turn often in bed and take 5-10 deep breaths followed by 1-2 coughs. Do this every hour while you are awake.
• Throw away used tissues right after using them and wash your hands well. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing.
• Stop smoking.
• Make a followup appointment with your family health care provider within 5-7 days. Your family health care provider may want an X-ray at 6 weeks to check your lungs.
• Take all of your medication as prescribed.
How can I prevent pneumonia?

- Keep your immune system strong.
  › Get a flu vaccine.
  › Rest as much as possible.
  › Drink plenty of fluids (if you are not on a fluid restricted diet).
  › Eat a healthy diet.
  › Exercise.
- Practice good hygiene (e.g., throw away used tissues right after using them and wash your hands well, cover your mouth and nose when coughing).
- Don’t smoke.

Call your family health care provider or return to the Emergency Department if you have any of the following:
  › fever over 38° C/100.4° F for more than 3-5 days
  › more trouble breathing
  › coughing up blood
  › cough does not get better in 5-7 days or you are not feeling better in 3-5 days
Notes:

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