



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Pneumonia

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Pneumonie (FF85-2061)



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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:

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.