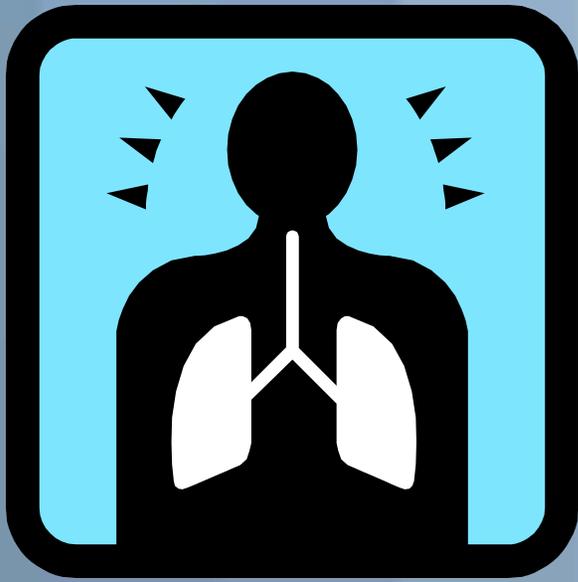


# Recognizing, Treating, and Preventing Pneumonia



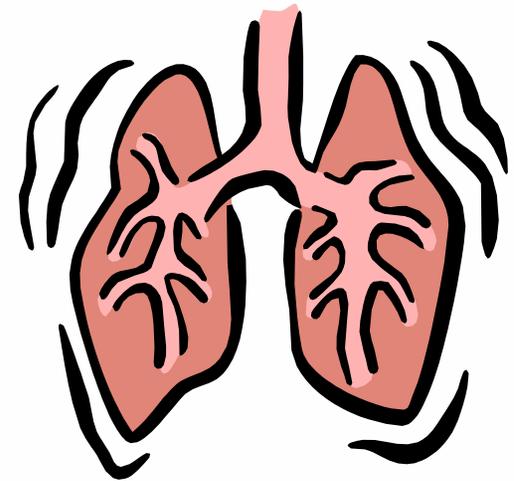
# Pneumonia can be a very serious illness.

- Most healthy people who get pneumonia will feel sick, and will recover within a few weeks.
- But, for people with health concerns, and for older people, pneumonia can:
  - Be a very serious illness
  - Cause death if it is not treated quickly



# Pneumonia is an infection of your lungs.

- Your lungs are a very important part of your body.
  - Your lungs help you to breathe.
  - If you have pneumonia, it may be hard for you to breathe in enough air to keep your body working properly.



Pneumonia is a common illness that anyone can develop.

- But, some people are more likely than others to develop pneumonia.
- You are at a greater risk to develop pneumonia if you:
  - Are an older adult
  - Have another respiratory illness (such as flu or bronchitis)
  - Smoke cigarettes, cigars, or pipes
  - Live in an area with polluted or smoky air



# Pneumonia can spread from person to person.

- This means pneumonia is a contagious disease.
- For example, you can catch pneumonia from another person if:
  - They sneeze or cough on you
  - You touch something that they have sneezed on and then touch your mouth
  - You share food or drinks with them



Some people with developmental disabilities may be at greater risk of pneumonia.



- People with developmental disabilities are more likely to:
  - Live in homes where they may come in contact with others who may have respiratory illnesses
  - Visit a hospital or doctor's offices more often
- These are places where you could catch pneumonia from other people.

# You may be able to tell if you are developing pneumonia.



- By learning about the symptoms of pneumonia, you may be able to spot it early.
- If you think you are developing pneumonia, you should tell a support provider or family member, and call your doctor right away!

# Some common symptoms of pneumonia include:

- A cough that produces green or bloody mucus
- A fever
- Feeling short of breath
- Chest pain that feels worse when you cough or breathe in
- A fast heartbeat
- Shaking or getting chills
- Feeling very tired and weak



Symptoms of pneumonia can be harder to recognize if you are more than 65 years old.

- Older adults who get pneumonia often have fewer or milder symptoms, such as:
  - A normal temperature
  - A dry cough with no mucus
- They may have different symptoms, such as:
  - Difficulty thinking clearly



# If you think you have pneumonia, call your doctor!

- Tell a doctor, a support provider, or family member as soon as you feel sick.
- Call 9-1-1 if you have serious symptoms, such as:
  - Feeling like your chest is being crushed or squeezed
  - Being worried that you will not be able to keep breathing
  - Coughing up large amounts of blood
  - Feeling like you may faint when you sit or stand up



# Your doctor will be able to tell if you have pneumonia.



- Your doctor will ask you questions about how you are feeling.
- He or she may also listen to your breathing with a stethoscope, or take an x-ray of your chest to see if you have pneumonia.

If you have pneumonia, you may have to stay in the hospital.

- If your pneumonia is serious, your doctor may ask you to stay in the hospital so he or she can monitor your treatment.
  - You may need to receive medicines through a needle in your arm (called an “IV”).



With proper treatment, pneumonia can clear up in two to three weeks.

- But, in older adults and in people with other health concerns, recovery may take six to eight weeks, or longer.
- If pneumonia is not treated, it can cause death.



# Less serious pneumonia is sometimes called “walking pneumonia.”

- This is because your illness is not serious enough for you to stay in bed or at the hospital.
- If you have walking pneumonia, you can ask a support provider or family member to support you as you are getting better.



If you have pneumonia, there are things you can do to help yourself feel better.

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Get extra rest.
- If your chest is hurting, ask a support provider to help you use a heating pad or warm compress.
  - Make sure the heating pad does not get hot enough to burn you.
  - Do not leave it on your body for too long.



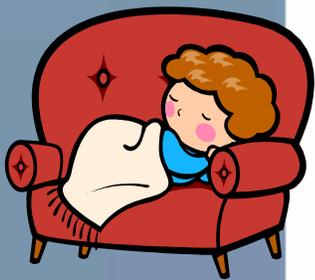
If the doctor gives you medicine, take it every day until it is gone.

- Even if you start to feel better, you should keep taking your prescription until it is gone.
  - You can ask your support provider to remind you.
- Before you use over-the-counter medications (such as a cough suppressant or pain reliever), you should ask your doctor if it is safe.



Good health habits are the most important way to prevent pneumonia.

- You should wash your hands often with soap and warm water.
  - It is especially important to wash your hands after you spend time with people who are feeling sick.
- Try to eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Make sure to get plenty of rest.
- Stick to a regular exercise routine.



There are other things you can do to lower your chances of getting pneumonia.

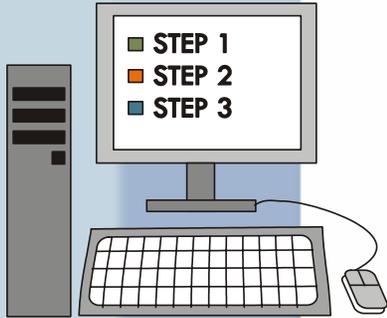
- Try to avoid contact with people who have other respiratory illnesses.
- If you smoke, stop smoking.
- You can ask your doctor whether you should get a flu shot or the pneumonia vaccine.



It is especially important to get a pneumonia shot or flu shot if you:

- Are 50 years or older
- Live in a nursing home or other long term care facility
- Have chronic heart or lung disease, including asthma
- Have a chronic illness
- Have HIV or AIDS





# You can check out these resources to learn more about pneumonia!

- The American Lung Association website:
  - <http://www.lungusa.org/site/apps/s/content.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=34706&ct=67271#whatis>
- Two DDS Safety Net articles:
  - <http://www.ddssafety.net/Archives/Archives/Providers/RespiratoryConditions.aspx>
  - THIS MONTH'S FEATURE ARTICLE :  
Understanding Respiratory Illnesses