



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

A Few Facts About Pneumonia

After Your Hospital Stay

What is Pneumonia?

Viral Pneumonia

Most common in the winter, viral pneumonia is a lung infection that causes increased fluid in the lungs. You get this form of pneumonia by breathing in the virus or touching others who have the virus.

Bacterial Pneumonia

Like viral pneumonia, bacterial pneumonia causes increased fluid in the lungs. However, this form of pneumonia is caused by germs called bacteria and is usually cured with antibiotic medicine and rest.

What do I do to take care of myself after leaving the hospital?

Medicines

- Take all your medications as directed by your physician. Do not quit taking your medicines unless your doctor tells you otherwise.
- If you are taking antibiotics, take them until they are all gone even if you feel better.
- Keep track of what medicines you are taking and when you take them. Bring a list of medicines or pill bottles with you when you see your doctor.

Fluids

- If you do not have to limit your liquids, drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day. This will help thin the sputum so it can be coughed up more easily. Avoid milk products, as they will thicken your sputum.

Breathing

- Take 10 deep breaths and then cough every hour while you are awake (even if you wake up during the night). This will help keep your lungs free of infection.
- Use a humidifier in your home to moisten the air. This will make it easier to cough up your sputum. Clean your humidifier with soap and warm water every day to keep it germ free.

Other tips

- Stay inside during very cold or hot weather, and when air pollution or pollen counts are high.
- Although you will feel like resting more, slowly increase your activity every day. But rest when you feel it is needed.
- For sore muscles try a heating pad (turned on low), a hot water bottle, or sit in a warm bath. Do this for 15 to 20 minutes out of every hour, as you need it. DO NOT sleep on the heating pad or hot water bottle as they can cause a bad burn.
- If you smoke, try to quit to improve your lung (and overall) health.
- Stay away from people who have colds or the flu.
- Consider getting your yearly flu shot and ask your physician about the pneumonia vaccine.

When should I call my physician?

Call your physician if....

- You have any questions about your illness or medicine.
- You continue to have fevers.
- Your chest pain does not improve.
- You get nauseated, have vomiting, or diarrhea.
- You are coughing up bloody sputum.
- Your skin is itchy, swollen, or has a rash. This may mean you are allergic to your medicine.

Seek care immediately if....

- You have trouble breathing.
- You have a severe headache, stiff neck, or feel confused.
- You continue to have fever and chills and feel worse even though you are taking medicine.

Speak Up if You Have Any Questions

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