

# PNEUMONIA, BACTERIAL

## TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

8.6

### DESCRIPTION

Infection and inflammation of the lungs with bacterial germs. It causes fluid to collect in the air sacs (alveoli), making it difficult to breathe. Bacterial pneumonia is not usually contagious. It can affect all ages but is most severe in young children and adults over age 60.

### FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- High fever (over 102°F or 38.9°C) and chills
- Shortness of breath
- Cough with sputum that may contain blood or blood streaks
- Rapid breathing
- Chest pain that worsens with inhalation
- Abdominal pain
- Fatigue
- Bluish lips and nails (rare)

### CAUSES

Infection with bacteria, such as pneumococci, haemophilus, streptococci or staphylococci.

### RISK INCREASES WITH

- Newborns, infants, and adults over 60
- Certain disabilities
- Use of anticancer drugs
- Smoking
- Chronic diseases
- Recent surgery
- Poor general health from any cause
- Weak immune system due to illness or drugs

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Obtain prompt medical treatment for respiratory infections. Arrange for pneumococcal and influenza immunizations of persons at risk. Avoid risk factors where possible. Stop smoking. Avoid second-hand smoke.

### EXPECTED OUTCOME

Usually curable, in otherwise healthy persons, in 1 to 2 weeks with treatment. It may take longer for the very young, elderly, or those with other disorders.

### POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Pleurisy.
- Pleural effusion (fluid between the membranes that cover the lung).
- Spread of infection.
- Pulmonary abscess.

### GENERAL MEASURES

- Your health care provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your symptoms. Medical tests may include sputum culture, a blood study, x-rays of lungs, and lung scan.
- Hospital care is often needed for more severe cases. Treatment may include breathing support, fluids, and/or drugs injected into a vein (IV), and removing excess fluids from the lung. Some cases may be treated at home.
- Don't suppress the cough with a drug if the cough produces sputum or mucus. It is useful in ridding the body of lung secretions.
- Use a heating pad on low heat or warm compresses to relieve chest pain.
- Quit smoking. Find a way to stop that works for you.

### MEDICATION

Antibiotics to fight infection. You may use non-prescription drugs, such as acetaminophen, to relieve minor discomfort.

### ACTIVITY & DIET

- Rest in bed until fever declines and pain and shortness of breath disappear.
- Resume normal activity gradually.
- Increase fluid intake. Extra fluid helps thin lung secretions so they are easier to cough up.
- No special diet.

### NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF...

- Fever.
- Pain not relieved by heat or prescribed medication.
- Increased shortness of breath.
- Dark or bluish fingernails, skin, or toenails.
- Blood in the sputum.
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

Student Health Center



[WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC](http://WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC)

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

618-453-3311

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.