



# Pneumonia

**Pneumonia** is lung inflammation. It is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S., especially in the elderly.

## Signs & Symptoms

- Chest pain when breathing in.
- Fever and chills.
- Cough, often with bloody, dark yellow, green, or rust-colored sputum.
- Shortness of breath. Rapid breathing.
- Appetite loss.
- Fatigue. Headache. Nausea. Vomiting.
- Bluish lips and fingertips, if severe.

## Causes

Viral or bacterial infections are the most common causes. Other causes are fungal infections and chemical irritants like inhaled poisonous gases.

### Risk Factors

- Having had pneumonia before.
- Being in the hospital for other problems.
- A suppressed cough reflex after a stroke.
- Smoking.
- Very poor diet, alcoholism, or drug use.
- A recent respiratory infection.
- Emphysema. Chronic bronchitis.
- Radiation treatments, chemotherapy, and any medication or illness that wears down the immune system.

## Treatment

Treatment depends on its type (viral, bacterial, or chemical) and location. Treatment includes:

- Medications.
- Oxygen therapy. Hospitalization. Removing fluid from the lungs, if needed.

## Questions to Ask

Do you have severe shortness of breath and/or blue or purple-colored lips and fingertips?



Do you have **signs and symptoms of pneumonia** listed in the left column?



NO



## Self-Care / Prevention

- Get vaccines for influenza and pneumonia. (See **Immunization Schedule** at [www.HealthyLearn.com.](http://www.HealthyLearn.com.))
- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer in the room(s) in which you spend most of your time.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take medicines as prescribed by your doctor. Take the medicine for pain and/or fever that your doctor advises. Over-the-counter pain relievers should be avoided for some types of bacterial pneumonia.