



SENIOR HEALTH

Pneumonia

WHY YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED

Pneumonia is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. People over the age of 65 are most at risk. Bacterial pneumonia is the most deadly type, even when antibiotics are administered.

HOW TO AVOID PNEUMONIA

A pneumococcal vaccine is a safe, effective way to avoid pneumonia. For most people, one shot lasts a lifetime. The shot is recommended for people between the ages of 50 and 65 and for anyone with a chronic disease or weak immune system. The vaccine protects against pneumonia caused by pneumococcal bacteria, one of the most common causes of bacterial pneumonia.

TREATMENT

Treatment will depend on the type of pneumonia involved. General treatment includes:

- getting plenty of bed rest.
- drinking plenty of fluids.
- taking acetaminophen for discomfort and fever.
- prescription medications.
- taking an appropriate cough medicine (a suppressant for a nonproductive cough, an expectorant for a mucus-producing cough).
- oxygen therapy if you're breathless or turning blue.
- removing fluid from the lungs by suction or anti-inflammatory medicines.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

*chest pain that may worsen
with inhaling*

fever and chills

*coughing with bloody, yellow or
rust-colored sputum, or with little
or no sputum at all*

difficult or rapid breathing

general fatigue

headache

nausea

vomiting

bluish lips and fingertips

IF YOU SUSPECT YOU HAVE PNEUMONIA, SEE YOUR DOCTOR.