

Pneumonia Awareness Week

Pneumonia is an infection in one or both of the lungs. It can be mild or so severe that you have to go to the hospital.

It happens if an infection causes the air sacs of the lungs (doctors call these “alveoli”) to fill up with fluid or pus. That can make it hard for you to breathe in enough oxygen to reach your bloodstream.

Anyone can get this lung infection. But infants younger than age 2 and people over age 65 have the highest odds. That’s because their immune systems might not be strong enough to fight it.

Causes of pneumonia

Pneumonia can be caused by a virus or more rarely a bacteria. The infection stops the lungs from working properly.

The main job of the lungs is to move oxygen from the air into the bloodstream. When they’re infected, the lungs can’t do their job as well as normal.

Pneumonia in children: symptoms

If a child has pneumonia, you’re likely to notice:

- will have a moist cough
- will have a high fever
- might be short of breath or have difficulty breathing
- might complain of sharp chest pains when she breathes deeply or coughs
- might have a tummy ache and might vomit
- might be irritable or tired.



Pneumonia and dehydration

Most children also lose their appetite and might not want to drink. A younger baby might just look very ill and breathe rapidly, without showing any of the other symptoms above.

Young babies and children with severe pneumonia are at risk of dehydration.

When to see a GP about pneumonia symptoms

You should take your child to see your GP if:

- they have a cough and a high fever
- they have difficulty breathing
- they are vomiting and not able to drink much
- a young baby is listless and breathing rapidly.

Call 000 immediately if your child's lips look blue.

Tests for pneumonia

The GP can say whether your child has pneumonia by asking you questions about your child's symptoms and by examining him.

Your GP might send your child for a chest X-ray to check that your child definitely has pneumonia. Blood tests can sometimes help doctors to work out whether your child's pneumonia is caused by a virus or bacteria.

Pneumonia treatment

Treating children with pneumonia at home:

- If your breastfed child is younger than six months, offer extra breastfeeds.
- If your formula-fed child is younger than six months, offer her usual amount of formula. You might need to feed her smaller amounts more frequently if she's unwell.



- If your child is older than six months, keep breastfeeding or bottle-feeding. You can also offer your child clear fluids, like water. If your child isn't hungry while he has a fever, that's OK.
- Give your child paracetamol according to directions if she has a fever.
- Ensure that your child gets as much rest as possible.

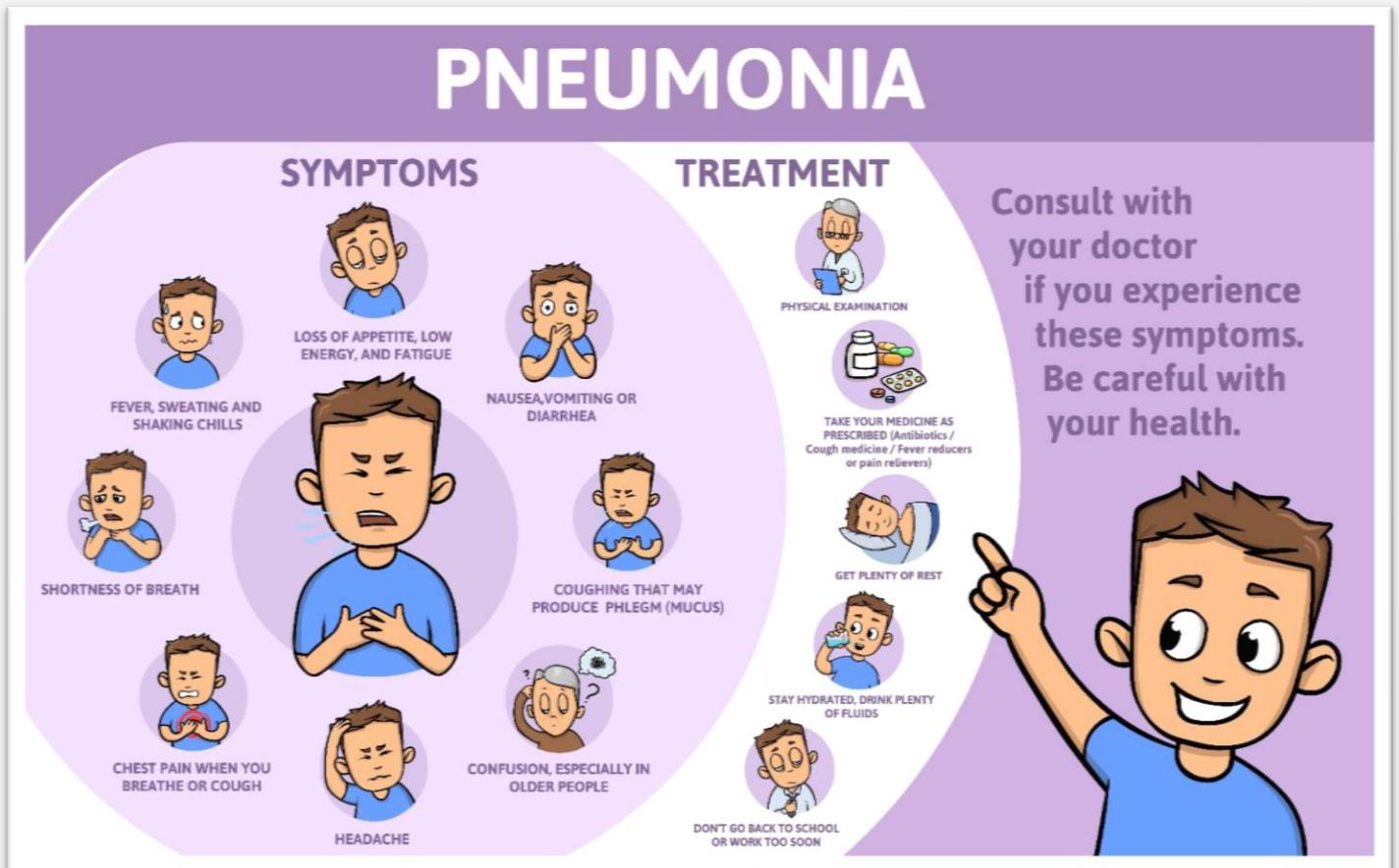
If your child's pneumonia is caused by bacteria, the doctor might prescribe antibiotics, which your child will need to take for a week or so. Antibiotics don't work for pneumonia caused by a virus.



References:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/pneumonia>

<https://www.webmd.com/lung/understanding-pneumonia-basics>



PNEUMONIA

SYMPTOMS

- FEVER, SWEATING AND SHAKING CHILLS
- LOSS OF APPETITE, LOW ENERGY, AND FATIGUE
- NAUSEA, VOMITING OR DIARRHEA
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH
- CHEST PAIN WHEN YOU BREATHE OR COUGH
- HEADACHE
- CONFUSION, ESPECIALLY IN OLDER PEOPLE

TREATMENT

- PHYSICAL EXAMINATION
- TAKE YOUR MEDICINE AS PRESCRIBED (Antibiotics / Cough medicine / Fever reducers or pain relievers)
- GET PLENTY OF REST
- STAY HYDRATED, DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS
- DON'T GO BACK TO SCHOOL OR WORK TOO SOON

Consult with your doctor if you experience these symptoms. Be careful with your health.