

Pneumonia - What to expect next

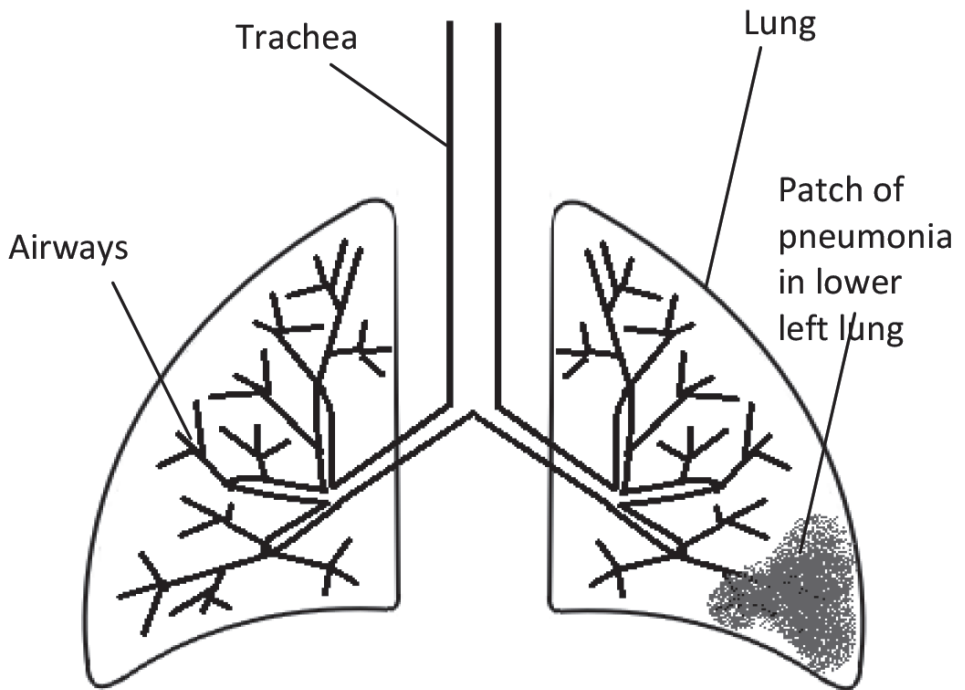
An information guide



Pneumonia - What to expect next

Pneumonia is inflammation of the lungs that can cause a serious lung infection.

Your lungs



Common symptoms

Common symptoms you may have experienced are:

- Breathlessness
- Cough
- Phlegm production (yellow/green in colour or blood stained)
- Fever
- Chest pain

What causes it?

There are a number of germs such as bacteria and viruses that can cause lung infection; the most common being bacteria.

These bacteria are breathed in from the air. In the majority of healthy individuals the immune system kills the bacteria without causing a lung infection. However in individuals who are in poor health and are at a higher risk, these bacteria can cause pneumonia.

These include people who:

- Are over the age of 65
- Smoke
- Have a pre-existing lung condition
- Have a weak immune system due to HIV, alcohol dependence, chemotherapy or other serious illnesses
- Have other medical problems such as diabetes

Nevertheless, it is important to understand that even healthy individuals can get pneumonia.

Your treatment

At hospital

During your time in hospital you may have been given fluids, oxygen, some pain relief and most importantly antibiotics.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are given to clear bacterial infections.

They are very effective and should make you feel slightly better within 3 - 5 days. It is important that you complete the full course of antibiotics, to clear the infection entirely and to prevent the infection from recurring.

After discharge

After you have been discharged, it is important to take extra care of yourself by:

- Drinking lots of fluids
- Taking your medications as directed by the doctor

Pneumonia affects people differently. Speak to your doctor about how long it will take until you can return to your normal activities such as work and exercise.

How long will it take to fully recover?

The time it takes for you to recover depends on how severe the pneumonia is but most people should expect by:

1 week - The fever should have resolved

4 weeks - Sputum production and chest pain should have reduced considerably

6 weeks - Breathlessness and cough should have reduced considerably

3 months - The majority of the symptoms should have resolved but fatigue may persist

6 months - Most people will feel back to normal

To ensure that the pneumonia has resolved, your doctor will arrange a follow-up and/or a chest x-ray. Depending on your progress, you may need further follow-ups.

If at any point you feel the medication is not helping or your condition is worsening, please contact your GP.

Tips for recovery

- Try to get up and active as soon as possible.
- Keep up with your vaccinations .
- If you smoke, see your doctor about ways to help you stop smoking.

Notes:

If English is not your first language and you need help, please contact the Interpretation and Translation Service

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☎ : 0161 627 8770

@ : interpretation@pat.nhs.uk

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For enquiries regarding clinic appointments, clinical care and treatment please contact 0161 624 0420 and the Switchboard Operator will put you through to the correct department / service

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