

# Pneumonia

## What is it?

Pneumonia is a serious lung infection caused by a bacteria or virus. It can affect one or both lungs. Pneumonia causes the lungs to become inflamed and can fill with pus or liquid. This makes it hard to breathe. Pneumonia can also cause coughing, chills, fever, pain, and shortness of breath.

Pneumonia can be caught in the community or in a hospital or healthcare setting. You will need an X-ray to confirm you have pneumonia. Your treatment will depend on the cause and type of pneumonia. Common treatments include antibiotics and rest. Serious cases may need to be treated in hospital.

You can prevent pneumonia from coming back by:

- Getting vaccinated
- Not smoking (Call the Quitline on 13 78 48)
- Washing your hands regularly
- Living a healthy lifestyle

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP may help treat and manage your symptoms and support you as you recover. They may also arrange some blood tests and X-Rays. Treatment will depend on whether the cause is bacteria or a virus.

If your GP feels your symptoms are mild, they may give you antibiotics and help you manage your condition at home. They may want to see you every day until you get better.

Your GP may talk to you about how to recover at home and what to do if your symptoms get worse. Sometimes you may need a different type of medication.

If you are not getting better after a few days, your GP may refer you to hospital.

## What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP may see you again in six weeks to check your health and symptoms. Your GP may also:

- Arrange a chest X-ray and blood tests
- Help you reduce any risk factors for pneumonia
- Suggest vaccines
- Refer you to a specialist if your symptoms come back

If you have a carer your GP may check in with them if they need more support. They may see if your carer needs respite care, home care or more support.

## When should I call an ambulance?



If you or someone you know is experiencing severe symptoms – rapid breathing, shortness of breath, pain when breathing or confusion – phone Triple 0.

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## What can I do?

Follow your GP's advice and:

- Take any medications as directed
- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids
- Take mild pain relief for your fever if needed
- Quit smoking and avoid things that irritate your lungs, such as smoke
- Get vaccinated
- Ask your GP if you need physiotherapy to help clear your lungs

Pneumonia can come back, so to reduce your risk, live a healthy lifestyle.



## What questions could I ask my doctor?

*Do I need antibiotics?*

*How long will it take to recover?*

*How can I prevent pneumonia in future?*

*What if my symptoms get worse?*



## What supports are available?

### Public hospitals

The South Western Sydney Local Health District Respiratory Clinics provide assessment and treatment for a range of respiratory conditions. Clinics are located at the following hospitals, your GP can refer you if needed:

**Bankstown Hospital Respiratory Clinic:** Phone 9722 8243

**Bowral Hospital Respiratory Clinic:** Phone 4861 0181

**Campbelltown Hospital Respiratory and Sleep Clinic:** Phone 4634 4963

### Private specialists

Your GP may refer you to a private specialist, called a respiratory physician.

## Where can I learn more?

- **Lung Foundation** – Pneumonia: [lungfoundation.com.au](http://lungfoundation.com.au)

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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