

# WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PNEUMONIA

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine

## What is pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs.

## What causes pneumonia?

Pneumonia can be caused by many viruses, bacteria, and sometimes fungi. The most common cause is a bacterium called pneumococcus.

## How is it spread?

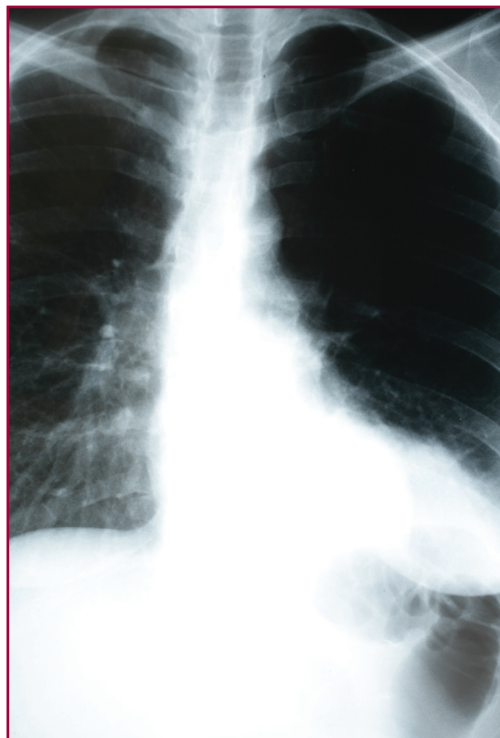
Pneumococcus is spread from persons who are ill or who carry the bacteria in their throat. You can get pneumococcal pneumonia from respiratory droplets from the nose or mouth of an infected person. It is common for people, especially children, to carry the bacteria in their throats without being sick.

## What are the symptoms?

Pneumococcal pneumonia may begin suddenly. You may first have a severe shaking chill which is usually followed by:

- High fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid breathing
- Chest pains

Other symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, headache, tiredness, and muscle aches.



## How is it treated?

Your health care provider usually will prescribe antibiotics to treat this disease. The symptoms of pneumococcal pneumonia usually go away within 12 to 36 hours after you start taking medicine.

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## For More Information

### Web Sites With Good Information on Pneumonia

American Lung Association

[www.lungusa.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=dvLUK900E&tb=2060321&content\\_id={71CC3CFD-4B3E-49C8-AA88-D76EAE1FB9F5}&notoc=1](http://www.lungusa.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=dvLUK900E&tb=2060321&content_id={71CC3CFD-4B3E-49C8-AA88-D76EAE1FB9F5}&notoc=1)

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/pneumonia/default.htm> (English)  
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/pneumonia/PDF/NeumoniaBacteriana.pdf> (Spanish)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pneumo/default.htm) (pneumococcal vaccine)  
[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/flu/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/flu/default.htm) (influenza vaccine)

National Foundation for Infectious Disease

[www.nfid.org/pdf/factsheets/pneuadult.pdf](http://www.nfid.org/pdf/factsheets/pneuadult.pdf)

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