

## Questions to ask about pneumonia

We can't answer all of your questions here, but these may act as a prompt either with your GP or if you decide to get advice from another source such as:

### About your condition

- Can you tell me more about pneumonia?
- Is pneumonia infectious and if so what can I do to stop other people catching it from me? Can I go to work or carry on with my usual activities?
- Can you provide any information for my family or carers?

### Treatment

- What are the pros and cons of this treatment?
- How long will it take for me to feel better?
- Will these antibiotics cause any side effects?
- Are there any other treatments that I could have?
- Is there some other information about my treatment that I can have?

### For family members, friends or carers

- What can I/we do to help and support the person with pneumonia?
- Do I need to take any precautions to avoid catching pneumonia from my family member or friend?
- Is there any additional support that I/we as carer(s) might benefit from or be entitled to?

## Following up on your treatment

- When should I start to feel better and what should I do if I don't start to feel better by then?
- Are there different treatments that I could try?
- If I've finished my course of antibiotics and don't feel better should I take them for longer?
- Am I likely to get pneumonia again?
- Can anything be done to stop it coming back?

### Supporting Information

- The British Lung Foundation,  
A helpline for people who are at risk from respiratory illness 03000 030 555  
[www.blf.org.uk](http://www.blf.org.uk)  
<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/pneumonia/recovery>
- NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Stop Smoking Information  
Smokefree: 0800 612 0011  
or mobile 0330 660 1166  
Mon to Fri 9am to 8pm, Sat and Sun 11am to 5pm  
<http://smokefree.nhs.uk>

# Information for Patients Diagnosed with Mild Pneumonia

## Why have I been given this information?

This information has been given to you by your Doctor or Nurse because you have symptoms of pneumonia or have been diagnosed with pneumonia.

The information in this leaflet explains the advice your Doctor or Nurse has given you about pneumonia in adults and is taken from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) on line patient information. NICE provides national guidance and advice to improve health care and you can see the full advice for patients at:

<http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/CG191/InformationForPublic>

## What is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is a type of chest infection. There are several different types of chest infection (including bronchitis), which can vary in severity. Pneumonia is caused by an infection of tiny air sacs in the lungs. When you have pneumonia these air sacs become inflamed (swollen) and filled with fluid. This makes it hard for your lungs to work properly.

The main symptom of pneumonia is usually a new cough along with at least 1 other symptom, such as:

- bringing up phlegm
- fever
- breathlessness or difficulty breathing
- chest discomfort or pain

Doctors usually diagnose pneumonia by asking about your symptoms and examining your chest. Symptoms of pneumonia are often very similar to those of other chest infections.

Most pneumonia develops outside hospital, in the community (sometimes described as community-acquired pneumonia). However, sometimes people develop pneumonia while they are in hospital with another problem (called hospital-acquired pneumonia). The information here is for people who develop pneumonia outside hospital.

## Treating pneumonia

If you have pneumonia, your doctor will assess how serious it is using your age, the symptoms you have and your blood pressure. This will help your doctor to decide whether you should be looked after at home or in hospital (your doctor will also take into account other things that might affect where you should be cared for, such as any other health problems you have and whether you have support at home). It will also help your doctor to decide what treatment you should have.

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to penicillin.

## Treatment for mild pneumonia

If your pneumonia is mild (also called low severity), it may be possible for you to be cared for at home without any more tests.

You should be offered a 7-day course of antibiotics as soon as possible after diagnosis. This should usually be a type of penicillin called Amoxicillin, unless you are allergic to Penicillin. Tell your doctor if you don't start feeling better after taking antibiotics for 3 days, or at any time if you start to feel worse.

If you're not feeling better within 3 days of starting your antibiotics, you may have to take them for longer than 7 days.

Please contact your GP immediately if you have any of the following symptoms

- Have a high temperature (more than 38° C)
- Cough up blood

- Vomiting or nausea that prevent drinking plenty of liquids or keeping the antibiotics down

If you have any concerns please contact the Practice on:

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Always make sure you finish the course of antibiotics, unless told to stop by your Doctor or the pneumonia may return.

## What to expect after starting your antibiotics

Your doctor should explain to you that your symptoms should start to improve after taking antibiotics, but that some people get better quicker than others and this may depend on how severe your pneumonia is.

### You should expect that after:

- 1 week your fever should be gone
- 4 weeks your chest will feel better and you will produce less phlegm
- 6 weeks you will be coughing less and finding it easier to breathe
- 3 months most of your symptoms will be gone, but you may still feel tired.

By 6 months you should feel back to normal. Tell your doctor if you think your symptoms are getting worse or if they're not improving as expected.