

Greenwich Hospital

PNEUMONIA

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an infection of one or both of the lungs. It is caused by a bacterial, viral or fungal infection and causes severe inflammation. This inflammation can make breathing difficult and sometimes painful. Aspiration pneumonia is a type of pneumonia that can occur when a foreign substance such as food or liquid enters the lungs.

What are the symptoms of pneumonia?

The symptoms of pneumonia may include one or more of the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Fever and sweating
- Chest pain
- Cough (moist or dry)
- Increased mucus production

How is pneumonia treated?

There are various treatments for pneumonia. Your physician will plan your treatment based on the type of pneumonia you have and the symptoms that you are experiencing. Rest is recommended for all patients and medications are prescribed to relieve symptoms.

What should I expect while in the hospital with pneumonia?

Pneumonia could take several weeks to months to fully resolve depending upon your other health conditions. The goal of your hospital team is to *begin* treatment of your illness so that you can safely return to the comfort of your home to complete your recovery. During your stay with us, you should expect to have:

- Chest x-ray(s)
- Blood work
- Intravenous or oral medications for the pneumonia, such as antibiotics if it is bacterial.
- Nutritious meals to aid in your recovery.

What should I expect while in the hospital with pneumonia? (Continued)

Expect that your intravenous medications will be changed to oral medications as soon as you can take them by mouth. This is a good sign of your clinical improvement and you can expect to be discharged soon even though you may not feel completely well. If you need additional help after discharge, the Greenwich Hospital case managers can assist you to arrange for care. You may contact a case manager by speaking with your nurse.

What can I do to aid in my recovery?

It is beneficial to remain active while in the hospital. Activities you will be encouraged to do to assist you in recovering faster while in the hospital include:

- Participating in your daily care
- Getting out of bed and walking frequently
- Eating the nutritious meals provided
- Frequent hand washing

How can I prevent pneumonia?

General preventative measures and good health hygiene.

- Frequent hand washing
- Proper disposal of tissues
- Covering mouth and nose during cough or sneeze

Aspiration Pneumonia

- Elevate the head of the bed
- Special care during feeding to prevent choking

Post-surgical Pneumonia

- Frequent coughing and deep breathing
- Getting up as soon as recommended after surgery

Bacterial or Pneumococcal Pneumonia

- Pneumonia vaccine
- Flu vaccine

What do I need to know about the pneumonia vaccine

The pneumonia vaccine is an important step towards preventing pneumococcal or bacterial pneumonia. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), pneumococcal pneumonia accounts for 25%-35% of all pneumonias leading to hospitalization and results in 7,000 to 13,000 deaths per year in the United States.

- The pneumococcal vaccine is safe.
- Revaccination depends on a person's age and health status. Check with your physician regarding vaccination and revaccination.
- The pneumococcal vaccine is effective for preventing pneumonia caused by bacterial infections in adults and children at least 2 years of age.
- Vaccination is recommended for persons 65 years old or older.
- Individuals, who received their first pneumococcal vaccine prior to age 65, may be revaccinated at age 65, if greater than 5 years have elapsed since the previous dose.

How can I get more information?

• American Lung Association	www.lungusa.org	(800) LUNG-USA
• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	www.cdc.gov	(404) 639-3286

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education