

Pneumonia in Children

Pneumonia is an infection in the lungs often caused by bacteria or a virus. When a child gets pneumonia, tiny air sacs in the lungs can fill with fluid. This fluid blocks the air sacs and oxygen cannot get to the body from the lungs.

Signs of Pneumonia

- Chills
- Fever
- Chest Pain
- Cough
- Feeling very tired
- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Poor appetite or poor breast or bottle feeding
- Muscle aches

Your Child's Care

Your child's doctor will listen to your child's lungs. Your child may have a chest x-ray and a sample of his or her mucus checked for germs. This is called a sputum culture.

- If the cause is bacteria, your child's doctor may order antibiotics. Give the medicine as directed. Be sure to give **all** of the medicine, even if your child feels well.
- Your child may be given medicine to ease chest pain or coughing. Give the medicine as directed.
- Have your child spit any mucus coughed up into a tissue and throw it away. Do not let your child swallow mucus if possible.
- Do not give over the counter (OTC) cough medicine without asking your child's doctor first. Your child needs to cough and bring up the mucus. Coughing is the body's way of clearing the infection from the lungs.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Keep your child away from people who are smoking.
- Have your child drink water. Ask your child's doctor how much to give.
- Keep all appointments with your child's doctor. Follow up with your child's doctor as directed, even if your child is feeling better.

To prevent pneumonia:

- Teach your children to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet.
- Teach your children to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their sleeve when sneezing or coughing.
- Keep your children away from people who are smoking.
- Make sure your children get all of their vaccines or shots :
 - All children, starting at 2 months, should begin a series of vaccines that prevent bacterial pneumonia. Children older than 2 years may need a different vaccine. Check with your children's doctor.
 - To limit your children's risk of pneumonia, have them get a flu shot every fall. You can get pneumonia from the flu.
- Make sure your children are eating a healthy diet that includes fruits, vegetables, and whole grain foods.
- Make sure your children are getting plenty of sleep.
- Wash surfaces in the home that are touched often with soap and water or wipe with a disinfectant.

Call your child's doctor right away if your child has:

- Bluish-gray color to fingernails or lips
- Trouble breathing or fast breathing
- Nausea and vomiting
- A fever over 102 degrees F under the arm and is **older than 6 months**
- A fever over 100.4 degrees F under the arm and is **younger than 6 months**
- A fever for more than a few days after starting antibiotics

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.