

# Pneumonia

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## *Neenah Joint School District Health & Wellness Center*

Mon. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Tues. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Wed. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Thurs. 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Fri. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### **Pneumonia prevention:**

-vaccination: includes routine childhood immunizations, yearly influenza vaccination, and pneumonia vaccination if indicated.

-wash your hands.

-get enough rest and eat healthy.

Pneumonia is the term used to describe an infection in the lining of one or both lungs. It can be caused by a virus, bacteria, or even a fungus. The most common causes of pneumonia are bacterial or viral infection. In very young children, viral infections are more common. In adolescents and adults, bacteria cause about the same number of cases of pneumonia as do viruses. An infection that is caused by bacteria will have more pronounced symptoms than one caused by a virus.

The most common signs and symptoms of pneumonia include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. These may range in severity depending on the patient's age and underlying health. (For instance, older patients are less likely to have a measured fever when suffering from pneumonia.) Those who have other problems with their lungs, such as asthma, may experience worse symptoms than those whose lungs are otherwise healthy. Other possible symptoms of pneumonia include chills, body aches, poor appetite, and fatigue. Elderly patients may act confused when suffering from an infection.

In the clinic, pneumonia is diagnosed if a patient has characteristic symptoms and has abnormal sounds when their lungs are examined via stethoscope. If pneumonia seems likely but no such abnormal sounds are heard, a chest Xray will often be ordered. This provides a radiographic image of the lungs, and can show characteristic findings of pneumonia.

When pneumonia is diagnosed, it is most often treated with antibiotics. Because some bacteria are resistant to treatment, the patient may require treatment with two different antibiotics at the same time. Other medications may also be prescribed or recommended to help alleviate symptoms while the antibiotic fights the infection.

Recovery from pneumonia can take some time, and is also variable depending on the patient's age and baseline level of health. Fever will usually break within 1-2 days of starting treatment, but the cough and fatigue can linger for a week or more. Even when a patient is ready to return to school or work, the first few days back will be quite fatiguing. Adequate rest and healthy diet will help to improve recovery time.

