

Pneumonia

Getting Ready to Learn about Pneumonia

Learning something new can be hard. It is even harder if you are not feeling well. The purpose of this education plan is for you and the staff to review this information together. Here are some good things to tell the staff:

- Who you want to learn with you. We would like to have someone who will be helping you at home learn with you.
- The best way for you to learn. Do you learn best by reading a book or pamphlet, or by doing things yourself?
- If you are not feeling well, if you are in pain or you cannot focus on learning right now.

This information is important to your health. We may explain something more than once. We will be giving you information in small bits over several days. If there is something you don't understand **it's okay to ask us** to explain.

What I Need to Learn About Pneumonia

By the time I leave the hospital I will be able to tell the staff:

1. What is Pneumonia?
2. The symptoms I may experience with pneumonia
3. The causes and risk factors for pneumonia
4. How I can prevent pneumonia in the future
5. How I will take care of myself at home.
6. When I need to call the doctor for information or follow up.

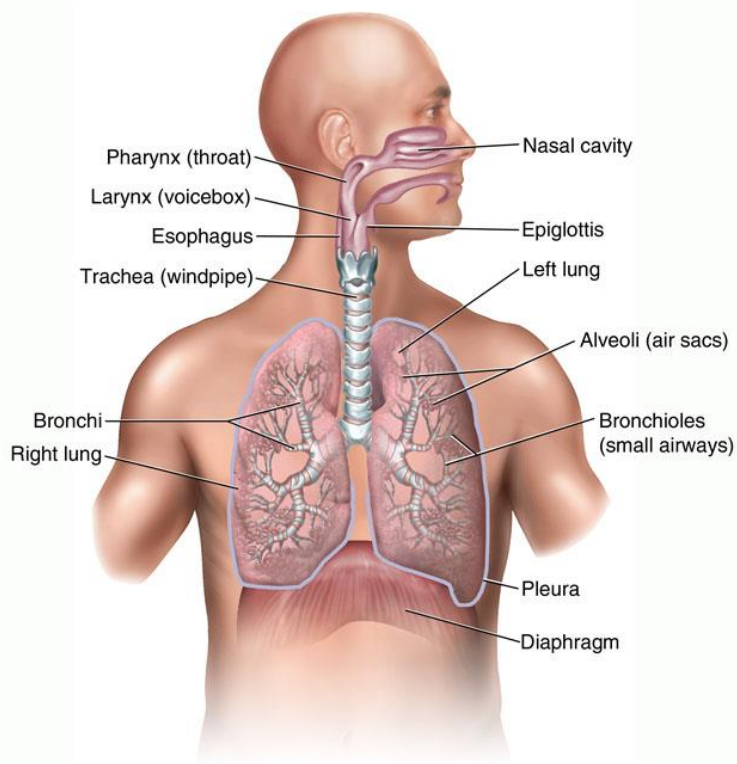
The staff will use three questions to teach me about Pneumonia:

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is this important to me?

The staff will ask me to repeat back important points in my own words, or ask me to show what I have learned. They want to make sure that I know about my disease and how to take care of myself.

What is my main problem?

I have pneumonia. Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs. It affects the small airways and sacs that carry oxygen to my blood.

Respiratory System

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What do I need to do?

I will be able to tell the staff the symptoms of pneumonia.

- Fever and chills or sweating
- A cough that can be dry or contain some blood or mucus
- Short of breath and bluish color of my lips
- Chest pain when I take a deep breath
- Muscle aches or weakness
- Confusion

I will be able to tell the staff the causes and risks for pneumonia

- Pneumonia can occur when the lungs are infected with a germ that is not normally in the lungs. This can happen when I am exposed to a virus or bacteria.
- If my system is worn down because of another illness I can get pneumonia.
- If I have had recent surgery I am at greater risk for pneumonia from the medicines used to put me to sleep.
- I also could have choked or vomited and inhaled some stomach contents.
- I am at risk for pneumonia if I:
 - am older,
 - have another lung disease,
 - have a weak system because of other illnesses or stress
 - have had a stroke
 - am in poor health or eat a poor diet
 - abuse drugs or alcohol
 - am exposed to certain chemicals at my job

I will be able to tell the staff how I will take care of myself at home.

- I will be put on antibiotics. It is important to start the medicine right away. I need to take all medicines that the doctor tells me to take as I'm told to take it. I should finish the medicine even if I feel better after a few days.
- When I have pneumonia I will rest until the fever is gone or I am not short of breath. My doctor will tell me when I can go back to my normal activities.
- I will drink at least 6 to 8 cups of fluid each day. It is easier to cough up mucous from my lungs if I have enough fluid in my body.
- Avoid fluids with caffeine or alcohol because they increase fluid loss.
- I will cough up any mucus as much as possible. I will use the cough medicine that my doctor gives me.
- My doctor could tell me to use a humidifier. If I do I will be careful to keep it clean.

- If I smoke I will try to stop while I have pneumonia. I will receive information on how to quit. It will be easier to breathe if I don't smoke.
- Sometimes medicine and food work together. I will ask a pharmacist if I have questions about the foods I eat and my medicine.
- I will not drink alcohol while I have pneumonia and am taking my medicine.
- It is important for me to change my position several times during the day. I need to be as active as I can.
- Recovery from pneumonia varies and can be gradual over time.
- I will follow the directions given to me from speech or physical therapists if I have them.
- I will raise my head to sleep if it helps reduce my coughing when I lay down to sleep.

How to use an incentive spirometer if I am given one.

- I will use an incentive spirometer every two hours while I am awake.
- I will breathe out (exhale) normally.
- I then place the mouthpiece in my mouth. Seal my lips around the mouthpiece.
- I breathe in (inhale) slowly and deeply through my mouth with my lips closed tightly on the mouth piece. I may need to hold my nose closed. I will continue breathing in until I reach my goal. My goal is set by my nurse and myself.
- After I inhale as deeply as I can, I then hold my breath for at least 3 seconds.
- I then remove the mouthpiece from my mouth and breathe out normally.
- I should repeat this technique as instructed, usually 10 to 15 times over 10-15 minutes. **I need to take my time.** Take a few normal breaths between deep breaths.
- I can keep a record of how deep a breath I take to check my progress

- Take deep breaths and cough
 - I should take a good deep breath in and then cough deeply 2-3 times every two hours.
 - I can use the incentive spirometer to check how deep I am able to take in a breath.

I will be able to tell the staff how I can prevent pneumonia in the future.

- stop smoking
- get a flu shot every year to protect me from pneumonia. One of the problems of the flu is pneumonia.
- ask my doctor if I need the pneumonia shot. This will help protect me from pneumonia in the future.
- see my doctor early if I think I have a problem that affects my lungs.
- avoid other people who have the flu or a cold.
- wash my hands often.
- wear a mask to protect myself from chemicals on my job.

I will be able to tell the staff when I need to call the doctor for information or follow up.

- have a rash or hives
- think I may be allergic to the medicines.
- don't start to feel better in 2 to 3 days after starting medicine or if I am getting worse
- have trouble breathing, get light headed or dizzy
- have questions about my condition or my treatment
- need to make another appointment
- think my pills are not helping.
- have questions about my medicine.

Why is this important to me?

If I have symptoms of pneumonia it is important to get treatment as soon as possible. The goal of my treatment is to prevent lung damage or other problems as a result of having pneumonia.

As part of my care I have received this education plan. I may also receive:

- Information about medicines I am taking.

Pneumonia Education Plan

Resources for Staff

- [Pneumonia](#) - Lexicomp
- [General Healthy Nutrition](#) – Nutrition Care Manual
- [Pneumonia: Adult](#) – Nursing Reference Center Plus
- [Pneumonia: Child](#) – Nursing Reference Center Plus
- [Pneumonia for Parents](#) – KidsHealth from Nemours

Teaching Tools (Items given to the patient)

- [How to Use an Incentive Spirometer](#) – Nursing Reference Center Plus
- Pneumonia Education Plan
- [Being Discharged after Pneumonia Treatment](#) – Medline Plus

References:

- [How to Use an Incentive Spirometer](#)- Nursing Reference Center Plus
- [Pneumonia for Parents](#)- KidsHealth
- [Being Discharged after Pneumonia Treatment](#)- MedlinePlus
- [Pneumonia](#)- LexiComp
- Nettina, S. M. (2009). Pneumonia: Patient Education In *Lippincott Manual of Nursing Practice* (9th ed). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott-Raven Publishers. (accessed via Bronson Library page 10-20-2011.)

Always close each teaching session with the question, “What questions do you have for me?”

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