

# Pneumonia

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Know health risks: If you have COPD, Asthma, Heart Disease, or Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Cover your cough and sneezes    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice good mouth care  | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat a healthy diet              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keep hands clean  | <input type="checkbox"/> Store oxygen cylinders safely   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stay current with vaccinations  | <input type="checkbox"/> If you smoke, consider quitting |

## Green Flags – All Clear

## What this means ...



### If you:

- Have no shortness of breath, fever below 100, no or slight cough, no chest pain, and eating and drinking liquids normally
- Are prescribed medications, and you take as directed.

- Good work!
- If you have pneumonia, medications and treatments are helping control infection.

Keep up the good work!

## Yellow Flags – Caution

## What this means ...



### If you:

- Feel tired or weak
- Have increased difficulty breathing
- Have a fever of 100.4 more than 72 hours
- Have Increased coughing or wheezing
- Have yellow/green color to material you are coughing up.
- Have had a cold and you get worse instead of better

- You may have developed an infection, or your medication may need to be changed

**Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Instructions:**

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team.

## Red Flags – Stop and Think

## What this means ...



### If you have:

- Trouble breathing, or breathing faster than normal, with or without exercise.
- Confusion, trouble thinking clearly
- New chest pain that gets worse when you take a deep breath or cough
- Blood in the material you are coughing up
- A fever and shaking chills
- A fall and you can't get up

You need to be evaluated by a health care professional immediately.

**If possible, notify your health care provider's office.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1**

If you notice a Red Flag, CALL 911. Emergency!

# Pneumonia Fast Facts

- Pneumonia can be caused by a bacterial, viral, or fungal infection. Some pneumonia comes on gradually, feeling tired, muscle soreness, dry cough, no fever or chills to bacterial that has an abrupt onset of fever, wheezing, chills, rapid breathing, coughing that causes chest pain, and coughing up yellow or greenish material or sputum.
- Pneumococcal pneumonia is caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus Pneumoniae*.
- Aspiration pneumonia is caused when food, liquid, or vomit is aspirated or inhaled into the lungs. If the inhaled material is not coughed up, bacteria grow and cause an infection. Swallowing difficulties can increase the chance for inhaling food and liquid, so increase risk of aspiration pneumonia. Poor oral hygiene/dental care-missing teeth, and dentures that don't fit correctly can increase risk of aspiration. Also, poor oral hygiene increases the risk of bacteria growth in the mouth and throat and can spread to the lungs.
- Some medications have side effects that cause dry mouth, making it more difficult to chew and swallow. Other medications, like sleeping medications and medications for seizures can also impact your ability to swallow.
- It can be spread through coughing, sneezing, talking, or laughing, as a person who is infected can spread the droplets into the air.

## What can you do?

### Prevention

- Hospitalizations increase your risk of developing bacterial pneumonia so practicing self-care following the hospital discharge treatment plan is very important.
- Keep all follow-up appointments with your health care provider.
- If you use supplemental oxygen or use a C-Pap/A-Pap machine, keep face mask and tubing clean. Make sure tubing doesn't rest on the floor or near any dust or dirt.
- If you smoke, consider quitting. Request that people do not smoke around you.
- Do regular oral care, at least twice a day. This includes brushing your teeth or cleaning your dentures.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently, and avoid touching your face, eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Know your risks. Certain medical conditions can weaken your immune system, e.g. chronic kidney disease, diabetes, and certain cancers. Long-term steroids and the use of alcohol also increases your risk for pneumonia.
- Talk with your health care provider about getting a pneumococcal vaccination (shot). The type of vaccine prescribed depends upon your age, health/medical conditions, and your history of having any past vaccinations.

### Treatment

- Take medications as prescribed. Avoid skipping a dose, even though you may start feeling better.
- Drink plenty of liquids, water, weak tea, or juice unless instructed to limit your fluid intake.
- Practice deep breathing and clear your lungs to get rid of secretions.
- Avoid using a cough syrup that might stop your cough, known as a "cough suppressant". Your health care provider may prescribe cough syrup that helps to loosen the secretions, known sometimes as a "cough expectorant".
- Get extra rest
- Unless you have been advised by your healthcare provider to not take Tylenol, you can take this to relieve fever and pain.

## Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org)



Aging and Disability Services  
700 Fifth Avenue, 51st Floor • PO Box 34215  
Seattle, WA 98124-4215  
Tel: 206-684-0660 • TTY: 206- 684-0702  
[aginginfo@seattle.gov](mailto:aginginfo@seattle.gov)

[www.agingkingcounty.org](http://www.agingkingcounty.org)