

# Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs that can cause mild to severe illness in people of all ages. Depending on the cause, doctors often treat pneumonia with medicine.

## Common Causes of Pneumonia

Viruses, bacteria, and fungi can all cause pneumonia. In the United States, common causes of viral pneumonia are influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

A common cause of bacterial pneumonia is *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (pneumococcus). However, clinicians are not always able to find out which germ caused someone to get sick with pneumonia.

## Common Signs of Pneumonia:

- Cough
- Fever
- Difficulty breathing

## Preventing Pneumonia

You can help prevent pneumonia and other respiratory infections by following good hygiene practices. Try to stay away from sick people. If you are sick, stay away from others as much as possible to keep from getting them sick. You can also help prevent respiratory infections by:

- Washing your hands regularly
- Cleaning surfaces that are touched a lot
- Coughing or sneezing into a tissue or into your elbow or sleeve
- Limiting contact with cigarette smoke or quitting smoking
- Managing ongoing medical conditions (like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease)

## Lower your Risk with Vaccines

In the United States, vaccines can help prevent infection by some of the bacteria and viruses that can cause pneumonia:

- *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib)
- Influenza (flu)
- Measles
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Pneumococcal
- Varicella (chickenpox)

