

## Overview

- You have been seen in the Emergency Department and diagnosed with a suspected chest infection or pneumonia. This leaflet gives advice on how to manage at home now you have been discharged from hospital.

### Do and don't ...

- Do get plenty of rest but get up and move around as you can.
- Do drink lots of water to loosen any mucus and make it easier to cough up.
- Do drink a hot lemon and honey drink to help soothe a cough (not suitable for babies).
- Do gargle with warm salty water if you have a sore throat (adults only).
- Do use an air humidifier or inhale steam from a bowl of hot water (adults only) – you can add menthol or eucalyptus oil.
- Do raise your head up while sleeping using extra pillows to make breathing easier and clear your chest of mucus.
- Do use painkillers to bring down a fever and help ease a sore throat, headaches and muscle pain.
- Don't smoke as it can make your symptoms worse.
- Don't use steam for small children.
- Don't give aspirin to children under 16 to help with the temperature.

## General support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.
- The **NHS** website provides online health information and guidance [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- NHS 111** phone line offers medical help and advice from trained advisers supported by nurses and paramedics. Available 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
- There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, in Crawley and at Lewes Victoria Hospital. [www.bsuh.nhs.uk/services/ae/](http://www.bsuh.nhs.uk/services/ae/)
- Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** can be contacted with your comments and concerns, and to provide general support. [PALS@bsuh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@bsuh.nhs.uk)  
RSCH: 01273 664683.  
PRH: 01444 448678  
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Disclaimer: The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

Ref number: 956  
Publication date: August 2019  
Review date: August 2021



**NHS**

**Brighton and Sussex  
University Hospitals**

NHS Trust

# Pneumonia and chest infections

## Advice for patients seen in the Emergency Department

### Emergency Department

Royal Sussex County Hospital  
Level 5, Thomas Kemp Tower,  
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE  
01273 696955 extn. 64261

Princess Royal Hospital  
Lewes Road, Haywards Heath RH16 4EX  
01444 448745

[www.bsuh.nhs.uk](http://www.bsuh.nhs.uk)

# Pneumonia

## You are being treated for pneumonia

- You have been seen in the Emergency Department and diagnosed with a suspected chest infection or pneumonia.
- The diagnosis of pneumonia was made, taking into account a combination of factors, which may include your symptoms, the findings of your physical examination and the results of blood tests and imaging tests such as x-rays.
- Your clinical team has determined that you are currently well enough to continue treatment at home and have discharged you home with antibiotics.

## What is pneumonia?

- Pneumonia can be a serious illness caused by an infection of the lungs. It is often caused by bacteria but not always.
- Pneumonia is common in the community, treated with antibiotics and most people do not have any underlying cause.
- Different antibiotics may be used if you have had an admission to hospital recently - you should make sure your doctor knows if you have been in hospital.
- If you have certain medical conditions, such as a chronic lung disease, diabetes or have a weak immune system, this may predispose you to developing pneumonia.

## What happens next?

- Please finish your course of antibiotics as prescribed by your treating team. However, while you will feel better after the antibiotics you may notice that you are not completely back to your usual self. While it is difficult to generalise, and you may get better more quickly, you should expect that after:
  - one week, any fever should have settled;
  - four weeks, any chest pain or production of phlegm you may have experience should be much better;
  - six weeks, any cough and breathlessness should be much better;
  - three months, most other symptoms should be much better, however you may still suffer from fatigue;
  - six months, most people feel back to normal.
- We may ask your GP to request a repeat chest x-ray for you in six weeks' time to ensure your lungs have cleared the infection. If not please check with your general practitioner to see if you might need a repeat x-ray.
- Ask your GP about the flu vaccine if you have a long term medical condition or are over 65 years.

## How to avoid spreading your infection

- Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Throw away your tissues immediately.

## When to seek further help

- Please contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department:
  - if you are not improving;
  - if you feel your symptoms are worsening;
  - if you continue to have fevers;
  - if you develop chest pain;
  - if your shortness of breath worsens;
  - if you cough up blood.
- If you have any general concerns or questions please seek to your GP in the first instance.