

Primary Atypical Pneumonia

Atypical pneumonia refers to pneumonia that is caused by pathogens other than the traditionally most common and readily cultured bacteria (e.g., *S. pneumoniae*). In the category of atypical pneumonias, *M. pneumoniae* is the most common cause of **community-acquired pneumonia** in children 5 to 15 years old ([Cardinale, Cappiello, Mastrototaro, et al, 2013](#)). It occurs primarily in the fall and winter months and is more prevalent in crowded living conditions. Most affected persons recover from acute illness at home in 7 to 10 days with symptomatic treatment followed by 1 week of convalescence. The incubation period is 2 to 3 weeks, but the cough may last several weeks.

Chlamydial pneumonia, caused by *C. trachomatis*, can occur in infants and generally appears between 2 and 19 weeks after delivery ([American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases and Pickering, 2012](#)). The infant contracts this from the infected genital tract of the mother at birth. Chlamydial pneumonia is characterized by a persistent cough, tachypnea, and sometimes rales. Oral azithromycin is the treatment of choice; alternatively, erythromycin or ethylsuccinate can be given ([American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Infectious Diseases and Pickering, 2012](#)).

Bacterial Pneumonia

S. pneumoniae is the most common bacterial pathogen responsible for community-acquired pneumonia in both children and adults ([Cardinale, Cappiello, Mastrototaro, et al, 2013](#)). Other bacteria that cause pneumonia in children are group A streptococcus, *S. aureus*, *M. catarrhalis*, *M. pneumoniae*, and *C. pneumoniae*.

Beyond the neonatal period, bacterial pneumonias display distinct clinical patterns that facilitate their differentiation from other forms of pneumonia. The onset of illness is abrupt and generally follows a viral infection that disturbs the natural defense mechanisms of the upper respiratory tract.

The child with bacterial pneumonia usually appears ill. Symptoms include fever, malaise, rapid and shallow respirations, cough, and chest pain. The associated cough may persist for several weeks or months. The pain of pneumonia may be referred to the