

By Mayo Clinic Staff

Treatment for pneumonia involves curing the infection and preventing complications. People who have community-acquired pneumonia usually can be treated at home with medication. Although most symptoms ease in a few days or weeks, the feeling of tiredness can persist for a month or more.

Specific treatments depend on the type and severity of your pneumonia, your age and your overall health. The options include:

- **Antibiotics.** These medicines are used to treat bacterial pneumonia. It may take time to identify the type of bacteria causing your pneumonia and to choose the best antibiotic to treat it. If your symptoms don't improve, your doctor may recommend a different antibiotic.
- **Cough medicine.** This medicine may be used to calm your cough so that you can rest. Because coughing helps loosen and move fluid from your lungs, it's a good idea not to eliminate your cough completely. In addition, you should know that very few studies have looked at whether over-the-counter cough medicines lessen coughing caused by pneumonia. If you want to try a cough suppressant, use the lowest dose that helps you rest.
- **Fever reducers/pain relievers.** You may take these as needed for fever and discomfort. These include drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) and acetaminophen (Tylenol, others).

Hospitalization

You may need to be hospitalized if:

- You are older than age 65
- You are confused about time, people or places
- Your kidney function has declined
- Your systolic blood pressure is below 90 millimeters of mercury (mm Hg) or your diastolic blood pressure is 60 mm Hg or above
- Your breathing is rapid (30 breaths or more a minute)
- You need breathing assistance

- Your temperature is below normal
- Your heart rate is below 50 or above 100

You may be admitted to the intensive care unit if you need to be placed on a breathing machine (ventilator) or if your symptoms are severe.

Children may be hospitalized if:

- They are younger than age 2 months
- They are lethargic or excessively sleepy
- They have trouble breathing
- They have low blood oxygen levels
- They appear dehydrated