

PNEUMONIA

Pneumonia (inflammation of the lung) is a serious respiratory condition. Pneumonia can be a complication of other illnesses and can occur throughout the year. Infants and young children who experience common respiratory viruses and are exposed to secondhand tobacco smoke are at increased risk of developing bronchiolitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, and middle ear infections.

- CAUSE:** Many different viruses, most commonly respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza virus, and some bacteria. Most of these viruses or bacteria (germs) can cause other illnesses and not all persons exposed to the same germ will develop pneumonia. Physical and chemical irritants may also cause pneumonia.
- SYMPTOMS:** Rapid breathing and pain, usually fever and cough. May have runny nose, milder cough, and fever several days before getting pneumonia.
- SPREAD:** Viruses and bacteria are spread from person to person by touching the secretions from the nose and mouth of an infected person. Spread may also occur by touching the hands, tissues, or other items soiled with nose and mouth secretions from an infected person.
- INCUBATION:** Depends upon the germ that is causing the illness.
- CONTAGIOUS PERIOD:** From shortly before symptoms begin and while the child feels sick.
- EXCLUSION:** Until fever is gone and the child is well enough to participate in routine activities.
- DIAGNOSIS:** Call your healthcare provider if your child has a high fever or persistent sore throat or cough.
- TREATMENT:** There is no specific treatment for most respiratory viruses. Antibiotics may be prescribed if a bacterial infection is suspected or diagnosed. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions about medications or to discuss any concerns.

PREVENTION/CONTROL:

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after touching the secretions from the nose or mouth. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.**
2. Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing or cough/sneeze into sleeve.
3. Dispose of used tissues.
4. Clean and disinfect mouthed toys at least daily and when soiled.

For more information, you or your healthcare provider may call Hennepin County Community Health Department at (952) 351-5230, or call your local health department.

Prepared by Hennepin County Community Health Department with the support of the local and state disease prevention and control staff and childcare consultants.