

Recovering From Pneumonia: Your Home Guide

Medical-Surgical • Respiratory / Pulmonology

Pneumonia is an infection in your lungs. These steps help your lungs clear and help you get your strength back.

Take all your antibiotic

- Take every dose on time.
- **Finish all of it, even when you feel better.**
- Do not save or share antibiotics.

Clear your lungs

- Drink plenty of fluids, unless your provider limits them.
- **Use your breathing device (incentive spirometer) 10 times every hour while awake.**
- Sit up. Breathe out. Seal your lips on the mouthpiece. Breathe in slowly and deeply. Hold for 3 to 5 seconds, then breathe out.
- Then take a deep breath and cough. Hug a pillow to your chest when you cough.

Rest and build up slowly

- Rest often. Add a little more activity each day.
- Feeling tired and coughing for several weeks is common.
- Ask your provider when to go back to work or school.

Control fever and aches

- Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) as directed.
- Do not take more than the label allows in 24 hours. Never take more than 4,000 mg in 24 hours, or the lower limit your provider gives you.

- Many cold medicines also contain acetaminophen. Read labels.

Protect your lungs

- Stop smoking.
- Get a flu shot every year. Ask about pneumonia, COVID-19, and RSV shots.
- Wash your hands often. Keep your follow-up visit.

Call your provider today if you have

- Fever that is not better after 2 to 3 days of antibiotics
- A worse cough or more mucus
- Vomiting, so you cannot keep fluids or pills down
- A rash or frequent watery diarrhea

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- New confusion, or you are hard to wake up
- Blue or gray lips or fingertips

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/pneumonia-recovery-at-home/patient

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