

Your child's community-acquired pneumonia (CAP)

This leaflet explains about your child's community-acquired pneumonia. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your doctor or nurse.

What is pneumonia and why does my child have it?

Pneumonia is an infection in one or both lungs. It sometimes follows a simple cold and is also called a chest infection. Pneumonia can be caused by viruses or bacteria. Viruses are more common in children younger than two years old. It is called community-acquired as the infection started outside the hospital (in the community).

What are the signs and symptoms?

The signs and symptoms of pneumonia are:

- fever
- fast breathing
- difficulty breathing
- cough
- fast heart rate
- paleness and listlessness
- grunting sounds for younger children
- difficulty in completing sentences for older children
- chest, tummy or shoulder pain

Does my child need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Usually no tests are needed but your child's doctor will decide if they need to have a chest X-ray or blood tests.

What treatments are available?

Pneumonia is treated with antibiotics. Most of the time oral antibiotics will be enough but if your child is very unwell, has complications of pneumonia or cannot tolerate oral medication they might require antibiotics given through a vein. Sometimes oxygen is also required.

What happens if my child does not receive treatment?

If untreated, pneumonia may lead to complications such as abscess (a collection of pus) or accumulation of fluid in the lungs, and eventually the inability to sustain normal breathing.

Is there anything I can do to help my child?

If your child has pneumonia, you can help them by doing the following:

- Ensure they get plenty of rest.
- Offer small amounts of fluids often, to avoid dehydration.
- Get them to sleep propped up on a couple of pillows if over the age of one year, which may be more comfortable.
- Offer paracetamol/ibuprofen for fever and discomfort.
- Do not give cough medicines.
- Do not smoke around your child, and avoid environments where adults may be smoking.

Useful sources of information

Patient.co.uk

Provides online information on health and wellbeing to help you understand and make choices about your health.

w : www.patient.co.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child and pneumonia, please contact Reception on **020 7188 8845** (Monday to Sunday, 24 hours a day) and they will be able to direct your call to medical and nursing staff caring for your child.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) e: pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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