

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 an abscess (a collection of pus) or an 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 website

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

w: www.patient.info

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about your child and pneumonia, please contact Mountain ward medical reception on **t:** 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 **w:** 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, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm **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

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch. **t:** 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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