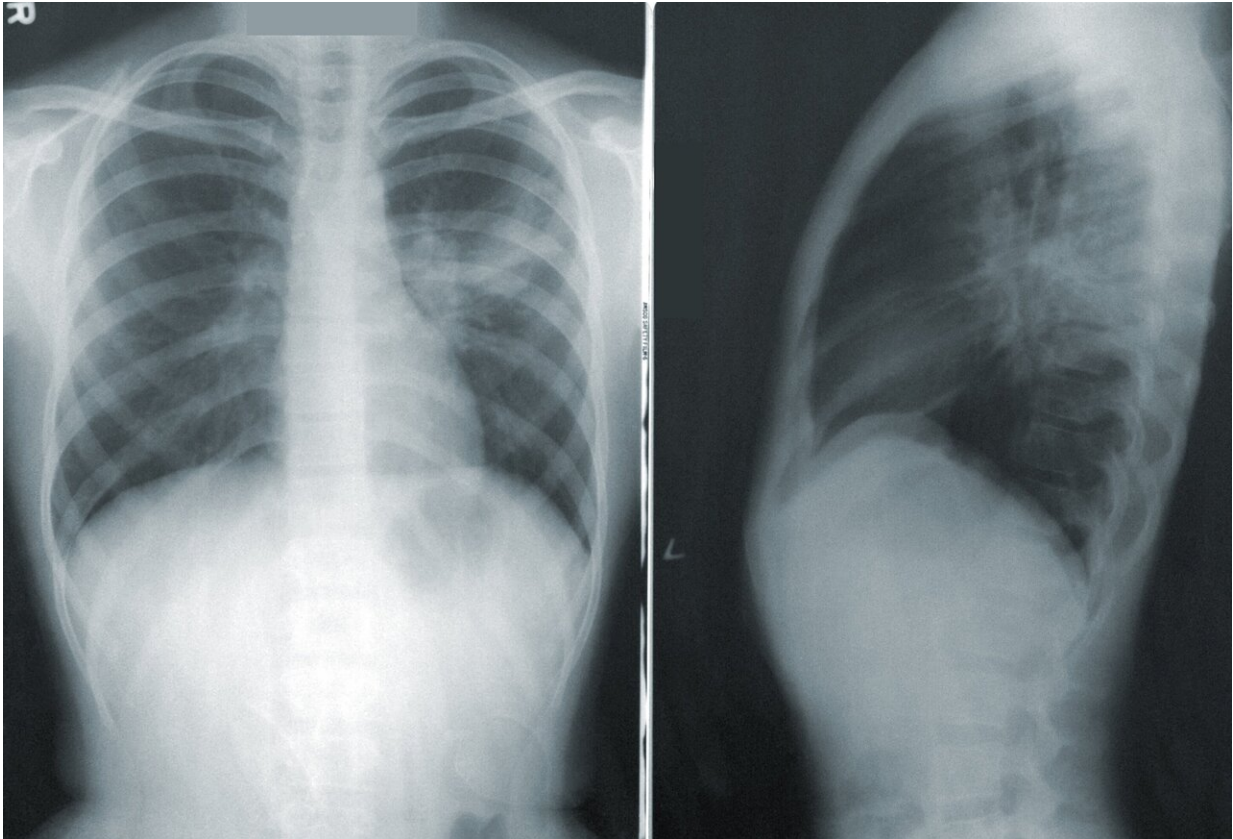


# Exploring available treatment for pneumonia

November 14 2022, by Laurel Kelly

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Pneumonia causes more than a million hospitalizations and 50,000 deaths per year in the U.S., according to the American Lung Association.

Pneumonia is an infection that inflames the air sacs in one or both lungs.

The [air sacs](#) may fill with fluid or pus, causing cough with phlegm or pus, fever, chills, and difficulty breathing.

Pneumonia can range in seriousness from mild to life-threatening. It is most serious for [infants](#) and [young children](#), people over 65, and people with [health problems](#) or weakened immune systems.

Signs and symptoms of [pneumonia](#) vary from mild to severe, depending on the type of germ causing the infection, age and overall health. Mild signs and symptoms often are similar to those of a cold or flu, but they last longer. Newborns and infants may not show any sign of the infection, or they may vomit; have a fever and cough; appear restless, or tired and without energy; or have difficulty breathing and eating.

Vaccines are available to prevent some types of pneumonia. The vaccination guidelines have changed over time, so be sure to review your [vaccination status](#) with your health care team, even if you recall previously being vaccinated for pneumonia.

## Treatment

Treatment for pneumonia involves curing the infection and preventing complications. Specific treatments depend on the type and severity of the pneumonia, as well as age and overall health.

Treatment can include:

- **Antibiotics:** These medicines are used to treat bacterial pneumonia. It may take time to identify the type of bacteria causing your pneumonia and choose the best antibiotic to treat it. If your symptoms don't improve, your health care professional may recommend a different antibiotic.
- **Cough medicine:** This medicine can 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, though. 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: These include drugs such as aspirin, ibuprofen and acetaminophen. You can take these as needed for fever and discomfort.

Hospitalization may be required in some cases, and some people may be admitted to the ICU if they need to be placed on a ventilator or if their symptoms are severe.

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.

"Walking pneumonia" is an informal term for pneumonia that isn't severe enough to require bed rest or hospitalization.

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