



## Information for patients and families about Pneumonia

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### What is pneumonia?

Pneumonia is an inflammation or infection of the lungs. It is usually caused by a bacteria or virus. Inhaling food, vomit or some other substance can also result in pneumonia.

Certain things can increase a person's chances of getting pneumonia. These are called "risk factors".

You are more likely to get pneumonia if you have one or more of these risk factors:

- over 65 years old
- a smoker
- a past history of stroke
- a past history of colds or other lung infections such as tuberculosis
- tend to get infections often (low immunity)
- unable to move around (immobility)
- problems swallowing or poor mouth care
- a weak cough
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or lung disease
- heart failure

## **How can I prevent getting pneumonia?**

Here are some things that you can do to help prevent pneumonia:

- Wash your hands often. Wash before eating and after using the toilet.
- Change your position often. Move about in bed; turn from side to side. Get help to sit, stand or walk each day.
- Raise the head of your bed to 30 or 45 degrees.
- Get a flu shot each year.
- Get a pneumonia shot, if your doctor recommends it.

## **What happens if I get pneumonia?**

Pneumonia can be treated in a Long Term Care Home. The doctor or nurse practitioner may order a chest x-ray and prescribe a medication, such as an antibiotic, to fight the infection. You may take pills. You may be given the medication through a thin tube going into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous.

As you recover, members of the health care team will check you and your heartbeat, temperature and breathing.

## **What if my condition gets worse?**

If your health gets worse, you may need hospital care. Your Health Care Team will decide if you will go to the hospital. This decision is made after talking with you and your family, and reviewing your wishes called Advanced Directives.

You Can also talk to the visiting Nurse Practitioner.  
Call 905-529-1613 ext. 227