

# Staying Healthy and AVOIDING PNEUMONIA

Smokers, adults over age 65, and people with chronic health conditions such as COPD, bronchiectasis, and NTM lung disease are at greater risk for developing pneumonia.

Recent studies show that some types of pneumonia can be more severe in men than in women.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Barbagelata E, Cillóniz C, Dominedò C, Torres A, Nicolini A, Solidoro P. Gender differences in community-acquired pneumonia. *Minerva Med.* 2020 Apr;111(2):153-165. doi: 10.23736/S0026-4806.20.06448-4. Epub 2020 Mar 12. PMID: 32166931



## What is PNEUMONIA?



Pneumonia is an infection of the air sacs in one or both of your lungs. It is important to recognize the early warning signs of pneumonia so it can be treated right away.

## What causes PNEUMONIA?

Pneumonia is commonly caused by bacteria and viruses. These germs generally enter your body through your mouth or nose and then settle into the air sacs of your lungs. There they can grow and spread, causing the air sacs to fill with fluid. Your risk of developing some types of pneumonia can be decreased by taking a vaccine (shot) such as:

- Influenza (Flu)
- Pneumococcus
- Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Measles
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- COVID-19

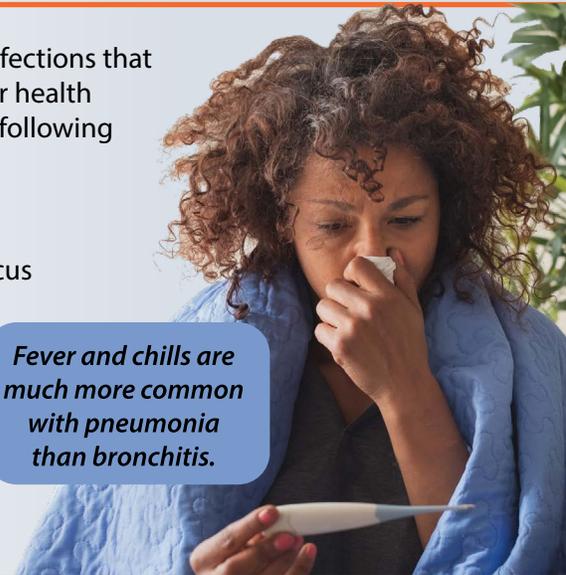
Some people with suppressed immune systems may have pneumonia that is caused by other organisms including fungi. These are called “opportunistic” infections.

## What are the symptoms of PNEUMONIA?

Some pneumonia symptoms are similar to other infections that cause COPD exacerbations (flare-ups). Contact your health care provider if you experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Changes in the color, thickness, or amount of mucus
- Shortness of breath or more rapid breathing
- Feeling your heart racing or pounding
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Chest pain when taking deep breaths
- New or worsening cough

*Fever and chills are much more common with pneumonia than bronchitis.*



## How can I avoid PNEUMONIA?

- Avoid touching your face. This prevents germs from entering your body.
- Get a flu shot every year and talk to your health care provider about a pneumonia shot.
- Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- See your health care provider twice per year, even if you feel well.
- Consider wearing a mask and staying away from crowds especially during cold and flu season.
- If you are a smoker, quit. Smoking makes it harder for your body to fight an infection.
- Complete the My COPD Action Plan with your health care provider and follow it daily.

Preventing pneumonia is an important part of managing your COPD. Watch for early warning signs of an infection or flare-up. Follow your My COPD Action Plan and contact your health care provider if you experience new or worsening symptoms.

For more information on how to prevent pneumonia, visit the COPD Foundation website at <https://copdf.co/COPD-Pneumonia>.

Visit the COPD Foundation website for free access to download:

- The My COPD Action Plan at [copdf.co/my-copd-action-plan](https://copdf.co/my-copd-action-plan).
- Tips for Living Well with COPD at <https://copdf.co/2S2PHAs>.
- The COPD Guides for Better Living Exacerbations booklet at [copdf.co/guides](https://copdf.co/guides).



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