



## Preventing Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection in one or both of the lungs. Those most at risk include the elderly, smokers, people with chronic lung diseases. For example, those with conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), including emphysema or asthma, and those with weak immune systems. There are some things you can do to lessen the chance that you will get pneumonia.



### Avoid infection

- Wash your hands often
  - Use soap and warm water.
  - If soap and water aren't available, use a hand cleaner with alcohol in it.
- Avoid touching your face and mouth with your hands.
- Use disposable tissues instead of a handkerchief. Throw used tissues away.
- Avoid people who have a cold or the flu.
- Try to avoid crowded places.

### Get vaccinated

Talk with your health care provider about vaccinations. You should get a yearly flu shot and at least one pneumococcal shot.

- Get a flu vaccine every year as soon as it's available in your area. The flu shot helps prevent you from getting the flu and complications of the flu, such as pneumonia.
- Get pneumococcal pneumonia vaccines. Talk with your health care provider about which pneumococcal vaccines are right for you.

### Do suggested breathing exercises

Deep breathing and coughing exercises can help clear your lungs. Your health care provider may suggest them. If so, you will be shown how to do them. Do them as often as your health care provider instructs.

### Take care of your body

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals.
- Avoid drinking alcohol.
- Don't smoke. Avoid places where people are smoking.
- Moving around helps keep your lungs clear. Ask your health care provider what type of activity is best for you. Walking is often a good choice.
- Get enough rest. Sleep at least 8 hours each night. Rest or nap during the day as needed.