



Calderdale and Huddersfield

NHS Foundation Trust

Patient Information Leaflet

Pneumonia

What is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is a lung infection where the small air sacs in your lungs (called alveoli, tiny air pockets that help you breathe) become filled with fluid or pus instead of air. This makes it harder for oxygen to get into your body, so you may feel short of breath, tired, and unwell.

How did this happen (Pneumonia)?

- Bacteria (most common cause)
- Viruses (like flu or COVID-19)
- Fungi (rare)

Risk factors (things that increase your chances):

- Having a cold or flu recently
- Being elderly or very young
- Smoking
- Weak immune system (body's defence system)
- Long-term illnesses (like asthma or diabetes)

It spreads through coughing, sneezing, or close contact with someone who is infected.

What are the treatment options for Pneumonia?

1. Antibiotics (for bacterial pneumonia)

Benefits: Kills bacteria and helps recovery

Risks: May cause side effects like nausea or diarrhoea

2. Rest and Fluids

Benefits: Helps your body fight the infection naturally

Risks: None, but recovery may take time

3. Pain relief (e.g. paracetamol)

Benefits: Reduces fever and discomfort

Risks: Must follow correct dose

4. Oxygen therapy (if severe)

Benefits: Helps you breathe better

Risks: Usually only needed in hospital

5. Antiviral medication (if caused by a virus)

Benefits: Helps fight certain viruses

Risks: Not always needed or effective for all viruses

What are the complications I need to look out for regarding Pneumonia?

Most people recover well, but sometimes complications can happen:

- Difficulty breathing
- Infection spreading to the blood (sepsis, a serious body-wide infection)
- Fluid buildup around the lungs
- Worsening of existing health problems

What do I do if I have any concerns about Pneumonia and any complications?

Seek immediate medical help if you have:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Dizziness
- Coughing up blood

Contact information

If you have concerns after leaving SDEC, please contact:

SDEC / Hospital Advice Line: _____

GP: _____

Out of hours: NHS 111

In an emergency, call 999.