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# Pneumonia: A Guide for Patients Medical Assessment Unit

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## Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email [pals@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@asph.nhs.uk). If you still remain concerned please contact our Complaints Manager on 01932 722612 or email [complaints@asph.nhs.uk](mailto:complaints@asph.nhs.uk)

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## Further Information

After reading this leaflet, if you have any queries please contact the Medical Assessment Unit at St. Peter's Hospital, telephone **01932 722936**.

# Pneumonia: A Guide for Patients

## Introduction – What is Pneumonia?

You have been diagnosed with pneumonia. This is an infection of the lungs most commonly caused by bacteria. Your pneumonia has been assessed by the hospital team and is safe to be treated at home with tablet antibiotics.

## Why have you developed pneumonia?

Anybody can get pneumonia, including young fit adults. There are other factors that may make people more prone to it.

These include:

- Long-standing respiratory conditions
- Smoking
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse
- Increasing age
- Other medical conditions such as diabetes, cancer and stroke
- AIDS

## **How serious is it?**

Pneumonia can range from mild to life threatening. Your pneumonia has been assessed as less severe and therefore safe to treat at home.

## **What symptoms might you suffer?**

Typically patients complain of cough (and you may produce discoloured sputum), breathlessness, lack of energy, fevers, loss of appetite, headaches, aches and pains, but often might have only 1 or 2 of these symptoms.

## **What is the treatment?**

Antibiotics are used to kill the bacteria that usually cause the pneumonia.

You should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration.

Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can be taken to help control fever and pain.

If you are a smoker then you should try to stop.

## **When will you recover?**

Antibiotics usually work well and you should expect the symptoms to settle over a few days. It may take several weeks for your energy levels to recover and you may feel exhausted performing tasks that you can normally easily achieve. You should expect to make a complete recovery without long term effects.

## **What to do if you are not improving?**

If the symptoms are not settling you should see your GP. If the symptoms are getting worse, then you should return to the Accident and Emergency department.

## **Is there any follow-up?**

You will receive an appointment for the chest clinic in 4 to 6 weeks time. At this appointment you will have a follow-up chest x-ray to make sure that the pneumonia has cleared from your lung.