

Rehab News

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Pneumonia Can Be Prevented – Lower Your Risk

Pneumonia is lung inflammation caused by bacterial or viral infection, in which the air sacs fill with liquid, rendering them useless for breathing. Having pneumonia is very taxing on the body, especially for older adults. Older adults are more susceptible to developing pneumonia especially after a surgery. Weakened immune systems, pain medications, sedatives, and anesthesia are all factors that contribute to the vulnerability of post-operative patients. Pain medications, sedatives, and anesthesia all cause patients to take shallower breaths. Breathing deeply helps to keep mucus from gathering in the lungs and prevent the development of pneumonia.

The symptoms of pneumonia are often difficult for older adults to recognize as they frequently mirror ailments that are common for the aging population. Pay close attention to changes in your body.

Common Symptoms Include:

- Coughing up mucus
- Fever
- Headache
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Pain in the lungs when breathing or coughing
- Confusion
- Lethargy
- Chills



Recognizing the symptoms of pneumonia is crucial for inhibiting the further development of the illness, but prevention is an even better solution. You can reduce your risk of getting pneumonia by following a few simple tips.

1. CDC recommends two pneumococcal vaccines for adults 65 years or older.
2. Get a flu shot every year to prevent seasonal influenza. The flu is a common cause of pneumonia, so preventing the flu is a good way to prevent pneumonia.
3. Stay away from people who are sick.
4. Manage and prevent conditions like diabetes.
5. Limit your contact with cigarette smoke.
6. Healthy habits such as: hand washing, dental hygiene, eating right, exercise, and deep breathing exercises after surgery are other important factors to help pneumonia prevention.

Did You Know? Physical Therapy can improve your ability to exercise and address difficulty breathing with helpful breathing exercises. Talk with your doctor to learn if therapy could benefit you.

Resources:

<https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/top-pneumonia-facts.pdf>

<http://www.cpmc.org/learning/documents/pneumonia-ws.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/Features/Pneumonia>

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