

## COMMON TREATMENTS FOR PNEUMONIA

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*"Hello."*

*"Hi, how are you?"*

Depending on its severity, your doctor may prescribe several forms of treatment for your pneumonia. The first will most likely be a prescription for antibiotics. Antibiotics help your body fight the infection. Other medications may be given to relieve the symptoms of pneumonia, such as chest pain, body aches, and a painful, dry cough.

Another common treatment method for pneumonia is oxygen therapy. Having pneumonia can decrease the amount of oxygen normally contained in your body. Oxygen therapy, delivered to your lungs through a mask or nasal tubes, provides the additional oxygen that your body requires.

While taking medications and perhaps oxygen, there are other things you can do to help your recovery. Rest well and eat properly; your body needs energy to fight your infection.

The goal in treating your pneumonia is to get rid of the infected mucus that clogs your airways. This is accomplished through exercising your lungs, thinning and loosening the mucus that is clogging your lungs, and getting rid of the mucus through various breathing techniques.

You can begin by balancing periods of rest with periods of activity. For example, begin taking short walks as soon as you are feeling up to it. Walking forces you to take deeper breaths which helps to clear your lungs.

Drinking lots of clear fluids, like water, helps thin out the excess mucus in your lungs. And coughing helps to bring the mucus up so you can get rid of it.

You may be taught how to do breathing exercises called bronchial hygiene therapy. These help you do all three – expand your lungs, loosen the mucus, and help you rid your lungs of the mucus that is clogging them.

Bronchial hygiene includes several skills. Let's start by looking at incentive spirometry. Incentive spirometry is a lung exercise used to help you expand your lungs by taking deeper breaths.

*"What I need you to do is take the mouthpiece and put it in your mouth."*

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Your healthcare provider will show you how to use the spirometer ...

*"... to achieve about 1600 here, that's what our yellow mark is for."*

... set goals for you, and monitor your progress.

A different tool called a flutter valve may be prescribed. This device creates vibrations in your airways, which loosens the mucus in your lungs.

Once your mucus is loose, you'll be shown how to safely and forcefully cough, which will help bring that mucus out of your lungs and out through your mouth. You may be instructed to use your deep breathing and forceful coughing techniques together. Continue to perform these exercises throughout your recovery in the hospital and at home, as directed.

Also while in the hospital, your care team may use other forms of therapy, called postural drainage or percussion therapy.

Regardless of the treatment methods prescribed, it is important to follow your healthcare providers' instructions. And remember to take all of your medications as prescribed, and to complete the full prescription – even if you are feeling better.

All of these treatments are commonly used to help clear your lungs of pneumonia. And when practiced properly, they can help you recover more quickly.