

What is Pneumonia?

DANIEL

NEW-monia. I don't know why it's called that, 'cause it's been around for a long, long time.

LORRIN

That's right. Pneumonia used to be very dangerous, but now, with proper medical attention, most kids will be just fine.

DANIEL

Good to know, right?!

LORRIN

Do you know what else is good to know?

LORRIN

That pneumonia is a lower respiratory infection compared to a cold which is an upper respiratory infection.

LORRIN

Pneumonia is caused by germs, like viruses or bacteria, that make your lungs sick when you're already sick with something else.

DANIEL

Wait a minute, aren't colds viruses?

LORRIN

Well, colds are caused by viruses. Pneumonia can be caused by viruses, but also by bacteria or other germs. As I said, usually, pneumonia is a complication that you get from another illness, most often a cold. When you're sick, those pneumonia germs are more able to attack your lungs. It happens more often when colds are more common - during fall, winter and early spring.

DANIEL

Aaah, another reason to love summer.

LORRIN

Well, as long as you're in the mood to perform, how about a little pneumonia re-enactment so that we know what signs and symptoms to look for.

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Who me? I couldn't possibly.

LORRIN

Okay, I'll do it. You should watch out for chills, flushed skin, and general discomfort.

DANIEL

You call that having the chills! Let me draw it!

LORRIN

Cough. Fast breathing! Flaring of the nostrils. Pain in the chest. Wheezing, and a bluish tint to your lips or nails.

DANIEL

So, what do we do to be less blue?

Hey, I'm a poet and I...

LORRIN

Don't say it!

We all know what you are, but what's more important is that we know how to treat Pneumonia.

LORRIN

You need lots of rest. And even though you'll be coughing a lot, cough medicine may not be a good idea. Generally, you need to cough and clear everything out.

LORRIN

When you see your doctor, he or she will let you know what's best after listening to your lungs and maybe getting an x-ray, which is a special picture of your lungs. Normally, if it's just caused by a virus, you'll feel better after a few days without medication. However, if your doctor suspects that your pneumonia was caused by bacteria, he or she might give you medicine - an "antibiotic" - to help fight the bacteria.

LORRIN

Even if you feel better, you should keep taking your medicine until it's all gone, just in case there are some bacteria still in your lungs.

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DANIEL

Mmmm MMmmm MMMPHHHH!

LORRIN

Yes, Daniel, we know. You're a poet and you don't even know it!

DANIEL

No, I know it!

I wanted to call and phoneya, 'cause I heard you had pneumonia. So try your best. To get lots of rest. And soon you'll be eating bologna!

LORRIN

Bologna!?!

DANIEL

It works.

LORRIN

So, feel better!

DANIEL

And eat lots of Bologna! So, you can wear your cologneya, and get on your...