

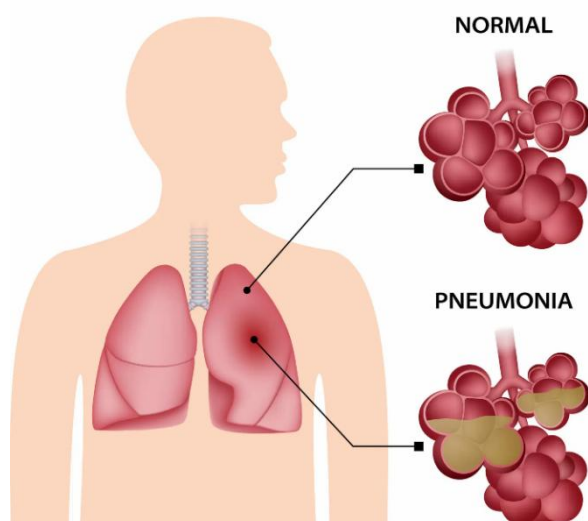
INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Community Acquired Pneumonia (CAP)

Introduction

You have been given this leaflet as a guide to your recovery. The aim is to help you understand what pneumonia is and how you may feel throughout the recovery process. This will give you a point of contact following discharge if you need extra support when you go home.

PNEUMONIA



What is pneumonia?

Pneumonia is inflammation of the lung tissue commonly caused by a bacterial infection. The infection causes fluid in the air sacs of the lungs. This makes it harder for oxygen to get into the blood stream and can make it harder for you to breathe.

You can get pneumonia in one or both of your lungs and this is determined by looking at your chest x-ray. When this has been taken, a trained professional such as a doctor, specialist nurse or radiologist will review the x-ray and look for something called consolidation.

This appears as white haziness on the lung. The current x-ray may be compared with a previous x-ray to identify if the changes are new or longstanding for people who have known long term respiratory conditions.

Common signs and symptoms:

- Feeling short of breath
- Persistent cough
- Chest pain
- Fever
- Fatigue
- Confusion
- Loss of appetite
- Headaches,

Treatment of pneumonia

When we have confirmed you have a pneumonia, you will be given a course of antibiotics. Antibiotics can be given directly into your vein (intravenously/iv) or in the form of oral tablets (po).

Antibiotics are given based on the severity of pneumonia and antibiotic choice may vary depending on if you have any allergies or intolerances. Below are some side effects that you may have when taking antibiotics.

Common side effects include:

- Feeling nauseated or being sick
- Diarrhoea
- Thrush
- Acid reflux
- Headaches
- Trouble sleeping.

Less common side effects include:

- Swelling to the face or mouth
- Rash
- Strange dreams
- Depression
- Changes in colour of the tongue.

If these less common side effects occur, please stop taking this medication and seek medical advice.

Leaving the hospital

When the medical team have completed their assessment, they will decide if you can go home.

You will receive a discharge letter that will also be sent to your GP. This will include the reason you came into hospital, what treatment and tests were completed and follow up information. The letter will also include a list of medications that you will be sent home with. This may include oral antibiotics if you still require them.

We may decide that you would benefit from hospital care at home. At King's Mill Hospital this is called 'SFH at Home'. This service can provide hospital level care but in your own home. This may be offered to you if you need short term oxygen or some help with your mobility. You will receive the same level of care that you would receive in the hospital but in the comfort of your own home.

Recovery

You should begin to feel better after three to five days of treatment. It can take a long time for your symptoms to resolve, and it is common to still be experiencing a cough, fatigue and breathlessness on exertion for a few weeks while you are recovering.

Recovery times can vary from person to person, however, the following guide from Asthma and Lung UK gives you a rough estimate of how your recovery may feel.

One week	Your fever should be gone.
Four weeks	Your chest should begin to feel better, and you should produce less phlegm.
Six weeks	Your cough should be less. You should be finding it easier to breathe.
Three months	Most of your symptoms should be gone but you may still feel tired.
Six months	At this stage most people will feel back to normal. If this is not the case, you may want to seek further advice.

What can you do to help your recovery?

It may be difficult to do tasks that you could do before. This is completely normal. Instead of trying to do your normal patterns and routines, set small goals for yourself each day. You should still be able to complete tasks, but you may find you need to do them a little slower than before. It is important to keep active but do not try to do too much as this may make you feel worse.

Remember that recovery is one day at a time.

What can you do to help your recovery?

Make sure that you complete your full course of antibiotics. Continue to take them even if you feel better. This will make sure that bacteria that caused your infection has completely cleared. If you do not feel better after your antibiotics have finished, you may need an extended course. You can seek advice from your GP, and this can also be discussed at a follow up appointment.

Nutrition and hydration will play a key role in your recovery as you may experience a loss of appetite. When your body is fighting infection, it uses up lots of energy, so it is important that this is replaced.

If you do not want to have big meals, try and eat little amounts but more often. Drink as much water as possible unless otherwise recommended by a health professional.

You may require high calorie drinks whilst you are in hospital; these are normally around 125ml but include a lot of calories to help your recovery. These are supplemental to your normal diet and are not to be used as a meal replacement.

It is normal to experience some pain with pneumonia. This is due inflammation, excessive coughing and in some cases working harder to breathe. You can manage any pain that you may be experiencing by taking regular pain relief such as paracetamol.

If you are a smoker, the most important thing you can do for your health will be to quit. The best way to do this is with the support and medication available on the NHS. If you haven't been offered support with quitting while in hospital, you can get this by calling:

- 0115 772 2515 (Nottinghamshire)
- 0800 085 2299 (Derbyshire)
- 01522 705162 (Lincolnshire).

You can ask nursing staff on the ward for help with this or further support can be found on the website here:

[Stop Smoking - Your Health Nottinghamshire \(yourhealthnotts.co.uk\)](http://yourhealthnotts.co.uk/StopSmoking-YourHealthNottinghamshire)

You should avoid alcohol whilst you are taking antibiotics.

If you need extra support or information regarding your alcohol intake further support can be found on the website here:

[Reduce Alcohol - Your Health Nottinghamshire \(yourhealthnotts.co.uk\)](http://yourhealthnotts.co.uk/ReduceAlcohol-YourHealthNottinghamshire)

What follow up will you receive?

Some patients will be invited back for a repeat chest x-ray six weeks after discharge. This is to check that the infective changes have resolved and that there are no other causes for your illness. Your x-ray will be reviewed by the consultant or specialist pneumonia nurse.

If you are feeling better and your x-ray is clear, then you will be discharged. If you are still experiencing symptoms or require any additional tests, we may ask you to come in for a face-to-face appointment.

Your follow up arrangements will be on your discharge letter, and this will be explained to you before you go home.

If you think you need follow up for pneumonia, but you have not received an appointment, you can contact the pneumonia nurse directly on telephone **07500 814548** between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday, or you can telephone the appointments line on **01623 672383**.

Preventing pneumonia

While you cannot completely remove the risk of developing pneumonia, you can help reduce the risk by following a few simple steps.

Good hand hygiene will help reduce the spread of germs and breaks the chain of infection.

There is a pneumonia vaccine that you may be able to have through your GP if you are considered at higher risk of developing pneumonia.

You are eligible if you are 65 or over, have not already received the vaccine or have a history of respiratory disease or long-term health conditions that affect your heart, liver, or kidneys.

Useful information websites:

- Pneumonia | Asthma + Lung UK (asthmaandlung.org.uk)
- Pneumonia - NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Stop Smoking - Your Health Nottinghamshire (yourhealthnotts.co.uk)
- Reduce Alcohol - Your Health Nottinghamshire (yourhealthnotts.co.uk)

Contact details

If you have any questions regarding your diagnosis, discharge, recovery or follow up you can contact the pneumonia team by calling:

- **Jade Smithson (Pneumonia Specialist Nurse)**
Telephone: 07500814548 (between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday).
- **King's Mill Hospital**
Telephone: 01623 622515, extension 4729.

If you have any questions regarding your x-ray appointment, you can contact the radiology department by telephoning **01623 622515** extension **6093**.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know.

You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

To be completed by the Communications office Leaflet code: PIL202507-01-CAP Created: July 2025 / Review Date: July 2027
